

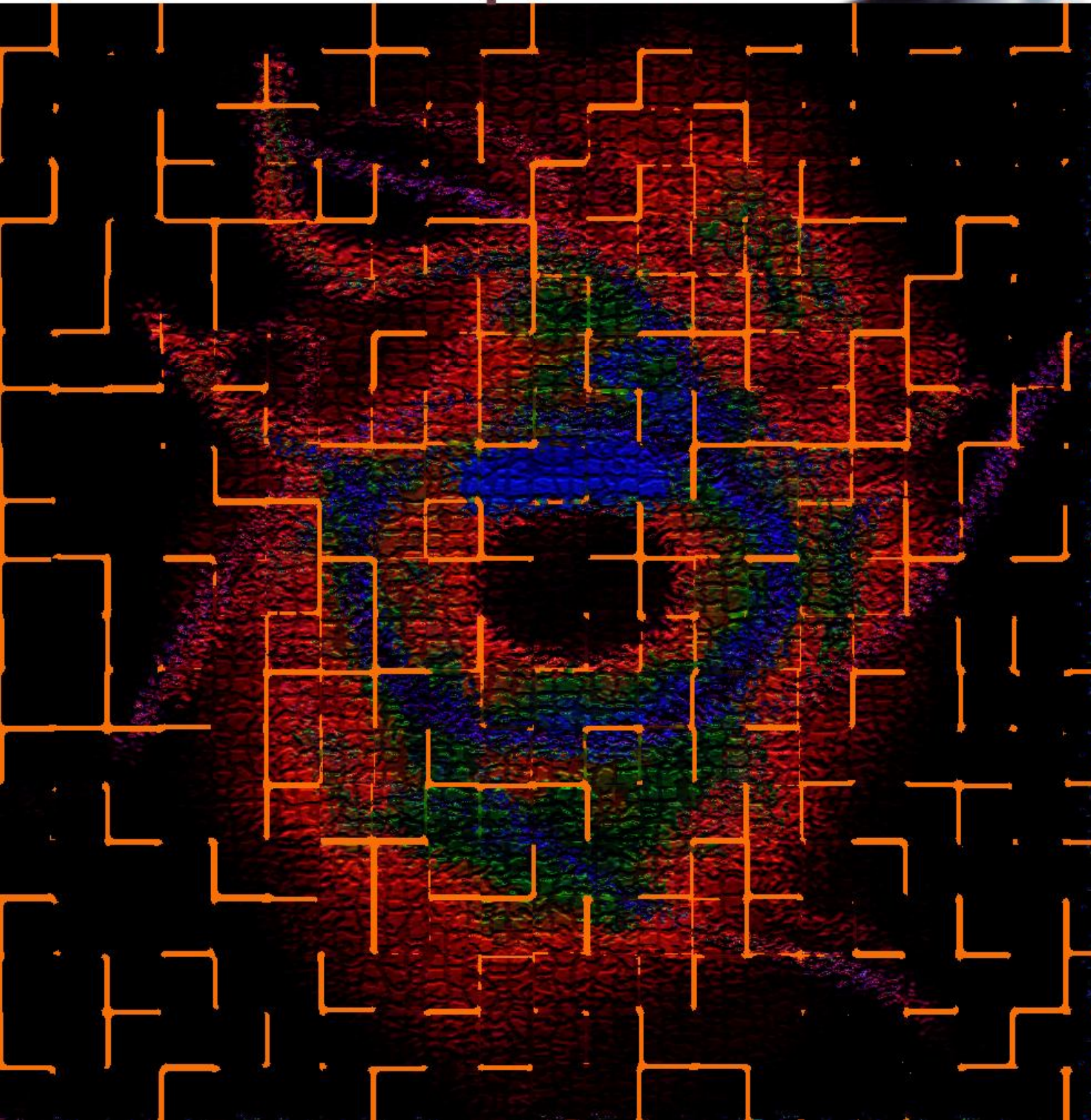
special edition



VANTGARDE

ELECTRO metal

Special



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ELECTRO METAL SPECIAL

The Early Beginnings

*The purpose of this article is to convey some sense of the electronic / industrial metal scene's more potent highlights with respect to the more avant garde or ground breaking bands out there. It is **not** meant as a comprehensive picture essay on the various tentacles of this most rewarding of genres but rather an overview, with examples to offer the newcomer some starting points to venture further.*

Forefathers

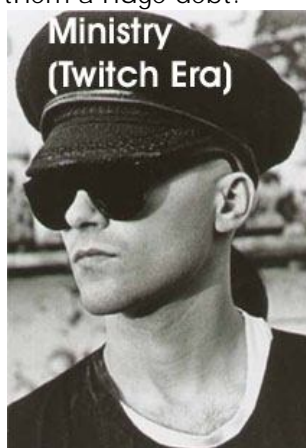
I could have started with some pre-metal industrial electronica genre-founders (KRAFTWERK, CAN, the whole krautrock scene, post-punk/new wave etc) but that would be beyond the scope of this article. So I am starting the overview with output for the 1980's when elements of metal are recognizable in the industrial/electronic din.

The roots of electro-metal, like most other genres, are not agreed upon and there is an ongoing debate on what initiated the movement. There are two distinct types to this, with as usual, a few exceptions:

- Industrial bands who added distorted guitars and metal structures
- Metal / punk bands who added industrial / electronic elements to their sound

A good example is **KILLING JOKE**. Formed in 1979, by their self-titled debut in 1980, they were a potent and unique force to be reckoned with. Angry yet danceable rhythms (the bass and drum lock is unmatched) with simple but dark distorted chord sequences, all beautifully topped off with one of the first punk utilizations of synthesizers and pseudo-samplers made them a success with the multitudes sick of traditional punk and hard rock. Add the ranting vehement style of Jaz Coleman and the controversial subject matter and imagery, it is evident that they made a proto-type that has been copied ad-infinitum. They later incorporated a number of tribal and metal elements to their sound, while remaining true to their original vision and still exist (off and on) today.

Another early contender was **BIG BLACK** (led by the infamous Steve Albini) who used a drum machine and punishing guitar work to achieve a noisy nirvana hitherto unheard of in rock music. Though their recorded output is meager, it includes such seminal classics as *Songs About Fucking*. Every spastic noise-core outfit and discordant industrial metal blast owes them a huge debt.



A famous name is **MINISTRY** who started out in 1981-82 as a traditional synth-wave band and continued like so till the *Twitch* LP (1986) when Al Jourgensen started incorporating his other influences into the music. It became darker, harsher, more aggressive and increasingly guitar based.. He continued this trend onwards to eventually arrive at the downright industrial thrash of *Psalm 69: The Way to Succeed and The Way to Suck Eggs* (1992). The lyrical content also drastically changed over the years, becoming an outright political stand against the evils of both the Bushs' administrations, before quitting for good in 2007.



The **BUTTHOLE SURFERS** came out with their self-titled EP in 1983. They are definitely the strangest of the prototypes. Way more avant garde than the rest, they continued this insane amalgamation of industrial/ electronica, noise-rock and punk well into the 2000's (receiving eventual semi-mainstream-college crowd acceptance along the way). But their 80's output is definitely their most abrasive and lunatic. And yes, the imagery has always been as sick as the music.

SKINNY PUPPY (formed 1982) are another seminal act that has changed its output over the years but there is always an element of industrial metal present in the sound. Even when the guitars were minimal the sound was denser, heavier and more haunting than most metal bands (*Mind: The Perpetual Intercourse, Cleanse Fold and Manipulate*). The later ones added more metal and gothic elements and to date they have never released a bad record. There is a wealth of weird synths and strange samples on all their albums.

From their first EP, **THE SWANS** established themselves as masters of repetitive ugly noise rock. It was one of the few early cases of a traditionally instrumented rock band sounding more 'industrial' than most electronic outfits. The pounding drums, fuzzy bass, sludgy yet strangely funky rhythms and Gira's monotone baritone all birthed countless imitators in the years to come. Later they experimented with gothic folk and more traditional rock formats.



The second half of the eighties saw the rise of bands like **MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT**, bringing the sleazy fun element (and occult imagery!!) back to an increasingly dark and morose scene. Not that their post-apocalyptic lyrical content and satanic imagery was any less disturbing, but it had wit and you could groove to the beats and riffs of *I See Good Spirits* and *I See Bad Spirits* (1988). They kept morphing, but keeping their evil sense of humor and the layers of electronica intact.

At this point it seems necessary to mention the iconic Wax Trax records, who have been responsible for the distribution and popularity of a number of electronic/rock/goth /metal bands who dared to be different. They dominated most of 80's and 90's with their roster of cutting edge artists. Sadly their output ventured more and more towards the club scene in the late 90's. They are all forgotten now as an Industrial AGM label.

Other bands who I cannot extrapolate on due to lack of time and space, but can be considered integral and influential to the early scene include Cabaret Voltaire, PiL, Controlled Bleeding, Throbbing Gristle, KMFDM, Front Line Assembly, Nitzer Ebb or Einsturzende Neubauten.

The second wave of industrial metal or as some pundits put it: **Industrial Metal** properly started towards the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. To study the phenomena we should look at the purveyors of this sound, who developed in isolation from each other or in parallel.

At this point it would be prudent to mention some genres, which, while being beyond the scope of the article, have had an immense impact on Electro Metal: Darkwave (the product of coldwave, synth pop and gothic rock) became popular in the early 90's (especially in mainland Europe), finding widespread acceptance amongst dance-clubs and the goth sub-culture. It also provided a fertile framework for some of the more open-minded metal musicians to experiment with (limited cold guitar utilization, eerie samples, electro drum machines and the juxtapositioning of angelic female vocals with harsh or growled male ones). EBM (Electronic Body Music, an amalgamation of Industrial Music with arty synth punk) also subtly but surely found favor with bands looking to expand their repertoire with electronic intelligent and aggressive rhythms.



Two names immediately crop up when we start looking into the of 90's electro metal phenomena: Godflesh and Foetus. **GOD-FLESH** was Justin Broadrick's main musical output after his short but classic stint in Napalm Death (with fellow sonic architect G.C. Green). It was the marriage of sludge guitar tonalities with a sub-heavy bass sound and a pounding yet plodding drum machine and topped off by Justin's hoarse shouting vocals. It essentially took the Swan's early sound to the next level. From the first recorded outputs it was a

force to be reckoned with (*Street Cleaner* 1989, *Slavestate* 1991).

The early live performances gave new meaning to the word 'harsh'. As evolution took its toll, more and more guitar layers were added, and each subsequent release displayed better production values, with a clear drum 'n' bass influence in the last two records, as well as Justin's attempts of singing (*Selfless* 1994, *Songs of Love and Hate* 1996). The band blossomed in critical acclaim and limited commercial success. Numerous remix albums and EP's kept the ball rolling. 2002 saw the official and final dissolution of this seminal band with Justin moving onto more generic post-rock pastures (and a more varied fanbase) with Jesu.



On the other hand **FOETUS** (or connotation thereof), the brain-child of Jim Thirwell started as an experimental rock outfit, with a distinct preference for programmed beats and guitar riffs. But unlike Godflesh the sound changed drastically over the releases, with Thirwell bringing in guest musicians and a broad array of instruments on each release. Between 1981 and 1988 a huge sonic palette was covered by Thirwell in many guises. In the 1990's there was a distinct maturing of sound and production (*Gash* 1995) while remaining experimental industrial metal. The adventurous nature of the music and the controversial subject matter ensured that Foetus remained very much an underground phenomena and is still highly underrated (*Flow* 2001 or *Love* 2005 barely break into anybody's top ten lists, or even have-heard lists). But if you are looking for a real underground avant-garde warrior this is a great place to start.

MALHAVOC, a Canadian band way ahead of its time started producing Electro/Industrial metal in the mid-80's and can be truly called original. They stayed at the fore of the movement 'till the early 90's, when they incorporated much stronger electronic elements into their sound and comparatively eased up the aggressive tendencies. They have a number of releases and it is recommended to the avant garde metal connoisseurs to check out their late 80's and early 90's stuff for some amazingly dysfunctional music (and trendsetting themes such as serial killers, woods, witches and zombies – as concept albums, seriously!!).

Also from Canada, **OBLIVEON** started out as progressive thrash outfit (*From This Day Forward* 1990, *Nemesis* 1993) that eventually discovered space (and electronica) as documented in its early stages on *Cybervoid* (1995) and sculpted to dark cyber perfection on *Technocarnivore Mothermouth* (1999). Another one to search out for.

One other notable who took the ball from Godflesh and ran with it, were **DEAD WORLD**, an underrated American outfit who produced three original and abrasive records (*Collusion* 1992, *The Machine* 1993, *Thanatos Rising* 1996) before fading into obscurity. The sound was a single-minded pursuit of distorted bass and pounding yet mid-paced drum machines with awkward samples, topped by some classic sludgy death metal riffing and dissonance.



FEAR FACTORY started out as a extremely precise death/grind outfit with great production and a distinct lack of guitar wankery (*Soul of a New Machine* 1992). They single-handedly inaugurated the new wave of metal, keeping the music catchy and mosh-able with some subtle melodic hooks and a tastefully limited use of samples and background synths. Initially it was the precision of the music as well as the slight fling with synthesizers that garnered them the 'industrial metal' tag. But it was the release of the *Fear is the Mindkiller* EP (remixes from the *Soul of a New Machine*) that cemented their position. The slightly more progressive one two punch of the *Demanufacture* 1995 (a

dark cyber concept album of gigantic grooves) and the *Remanufacture* remixes set (gabber metal anyone?!) was the absolute pinnacle of the band. After inspiring tons of sub-par nu-core outfits, the band joined the hordes by refusing to progress an iota further and eventually broke up.

At this point mention must be made of Psalm 69 by **MINISTRY** (see part 1 of this article for details) which can be attributed with introducing a new generation to the joys of the mixing of thrash riffs, political sampling and blitzkrieg drum machines.

MISERY LOVES CO. was a Swedish outfit that enjoyed limited success during alternative metal's heydays although being much heavier and darker than that lot. Their self titled debut (1994) and the subsequent EPs are a great mix of aggressive riffing and programmed beats molded into some seriously infectious songwriting.



In a less impressive but still widely influential manner **NINE INCH NAILS** introduced the MTV generation to angst that you could dance to. From the first release it was clear where NIN's output was destined for with the artistic culmination of all Reznor's musical worth in *The Downward Spiral*. Since then he has been regurgitating the same song structures with different names.



RED HARVEST were already a pretty disturbing outfit upon their inception, with a sound best described as doom metal played by robots

(*Nomindsland* 1992, *There is Beauty in the Purity of Sadness* 1993).



The Crowbar covering Kraftwerk shtick gradually gave way to a full fledged embracing of extreme metal and industrial soundscapes resulting in some of the best and most out there albums the genre has offered to date (*Cold Dark Matter* 2001, *Sick Transit Gloria Mundi* 2002). Lately though signs of redundancy have begun to appear.

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD exploded on the scene with their furious debut (though featuring metal wise man Devin Townsend and drum god Gene Hoglan) but it was the cyber thrash masterpiece *City* (1997) that cemented their position as miles ahead of the scene in sheer ferocity and songwriting. Devin has since released a large number of albums under this monicker and other names that effortlessly bring together industrial, progressive rock, melodic metal and even dream-rock.

There is even a band catering to the more fetish-oriented consumer for this genre. I mean **THE GENITORTURERS** who have stuck to their cock-metal gone industrial as envisioned by De Sade formula and eventually even got David Vincent (yes that Vincent!) in their folds, mostly due to his wife(!) fronting the outfit. It's an impressive run of albums and 'interesting' live shows that shows a band finding a formula and adhering to it.

The tail end of the decade saw widespread embracing of the industrial/ electronica aesthetic by a number of European bands, many of whom had originally broken new ground with black metal, often to the horror of the 'troo' crowd. Each interpreted the influence in a unique manner, often resulting in some of the most twisted sounds to come out of the genre.

THE KOVENANT started out as a typical black metal band destined with 2 records straight for the bargain bins had they not suddenly had a industrial avant-garde revelation on their third release (*Animatronic* 1999). Elements of thrash and electronica found place alongside the more extreme metal influences to give birth to a unique cyber sound. *S.E.T.I* (2003) found them further exploring space and synthesizers while remaining quite catchy. Their new album is eagerly awaited by those who enjoy experimental metal worldwide.



ABORYM have been terrorizing the extreme metal community since 1999 (*Kali Yuga Bizarre*), but they really found their own sound with *Fire walk With Us* (2001), a nearly perfect mix of black metal and industrial elements. The next album (*With No Human Intervention* 2003) continued on a similar sonic path, and *Generator* (2006) has found them delving further into insanity while still retaining their industrial black metal roots.



A band with a rather strange progression, **SAMAEL** went from a basic satanic cult black metal phenomena (*Worship Him* 1991, *Blood Ritual* 1992) to extreme metal songwriters extraordinaire (*Ceremony of*

Opposites 1994, *Rebellion* EP 1995) to one of the leading lights of space metal (*Passage* 1996, *Exodus* 1998, *Eternal* 1999, *Reign of Light* 2004). They have constantly challenged their fans with new concepts in cosmic/cyber metal composition, though their classic period is widely acknowledged to be 1994 – 1999.

Some other black metal elite who have incorporated industrial and electronic elements in their sound (to good or bad effect) include the raging yet cold **MAYHEM** (*Grand Declaration of War* 2000) and the mind expanding **ULVER** (*Themes from William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 1998, *Perdition City* 2000).

It is highly recommended that the interested reader further researches the various bands mentioned above, as well as digging deeper underground for the more obscure outfits that I have not touched. Electro metal has developed immensely as a genre in the last 20 years or so, with many off-shoots. But to further strengthen this most futuristic and forward thinking of genres, we need to support the original and innovative artists and root out the commercial pop rock masquerading under Electro/Industrial Metal's banner. So listen and analyze before spending your hard earned cash! As a rule of thumb, major record label hype is almost always wrong.

Check the reviews sections for many currently active bands that are continuously morphing the mold and carrying forward the flag of Electro Metal.

NOTE: A third installment of this article covering post 2000 bands of this ilk may or may not appear depending on the planetary alignments in this sub-sector of the space – time continuum.

Suleiman

DEKADENZ

The Beauty And The Machine



Quite unnoticed the German [D]ekaden[Z], who are around the underground culture since 1998, have released their debut album "Elektronoid" last year. The longplayer features electrifying extreme metal with dozens of weird electronic/industrial decoration and an interesting lyrical concept. Over the last decades the work with ingredients of extreme metal and electronica has become a challenge for musicians, who want to go a few steps further than the typical drums+guitar+bass+disgusting vocals concept. Symptomatic for most "industrial-metal" releases (beside very few exemptions like ABORYM's "With No Human Intervention") was their half-hearted realization and artistic weakness.

I have to admit that I don't see in [D]ekaden[Z] the revolutionaries of any genre nor is their debut a classic, but at least with "Mechatronik" and "Vom Untergang" they created two pounding and cold roboter-symphonies that made me just want to grab my digital pen to do an interview and learn more about their weird cosmos. Singer L.O.S. and machinist "@noize" were so kind to answer my questions.

polygon: Hello guys, greetings from Latvia. How is good old Germany doing these days?

@noiZe: Hi there! Can't say what's going on here these days as we are currently too busy working on our next longplayer to recognise it. But things are going very well for us. Thanks for asking.

polygon: When I was a teenager I sometimes used to work in some factories in my city. I really hated it, but it was good and fast money. However, in these days I felt what "human alienation" was all about. Being part of the machine, the merciless system of money accumulation. According to your biography, "Eletronoid" deals with the consequences of the technical and digital revolutions. What exactly are the outcomes of the last two decades development for the evolution of human being?

@noiZe: That's a good question, as we just installed our 750GB divX player, full of porn in our studio, 5min before. L.O.S.: ...and two zombie movies

@noiZe: No doubt, the Internet is a huge step in evolution. When we grew up, there were only analogue wired telephones, and now the I-phone in our pocket connects us to a world-wide collective 24h a day. We've all become small cyborgs. We take what the wire gives us.

L.O.S.: ..and what if this wire will be cut one day?

@noiZe: And of cause Laboga guitar amps are also a great invention in our century.

polygon: Your overall concept, e.g. lyrics, outfits and music, has an obvious connection to the "Brave New World". The way how you create your music, by using sound software, programmed drums and synthesizers, wouldn't be able without the rapidly developing technical skills of mankind. On one hand you have a critical eye on our today's situation, on the other hand you don't miss to use present advantages to create your own visions. How does that fit? If there is an alienation of human being that should be criticised,



wouldn't it make more sense just to sit in the woods and smash some acoustic drums to the melodies of a flute?

L.O.S.: That's easy to answer as the question is wrong. We don't criticise the technical revolution at all. If it all leads to the destruction of us, that's the way it has to be, and that's fine with us. **@noiZe:** Art shouldn't be critical in my eyes. We are just painting pictures. Yes of course, our paintings are not the nice looking ones. Expressionism 2.0 maybe.

polygon: As you may have noticed our webpage deals with vanguard art exclusively. Since the launch of avantgarde-metal.com there has been a lively discussion about what this term really means and how one should define this style (not to speak about its musical genesis). My dictionary tells me that "avantgarde" is originally a military expression, which stands for the soldiers in a battle who fight in the very first row and who are supposed to die first. Do you feel sometimes like a warrior of the first row and how do you define "avantgarde metal" for yourself?

@noiZe: I simply don't want to define it. For the warrior in the first row the whole terrain is undefined. We are not making music to be industrial, avantgarde or whatever metal. I hate bands who are hiding behind a genre. Definition leads to routine and routine means death to the art.

L.O.S.: Those who put us into these gen-



res are the listeners. That's OK....you may do that if you want to, but we are only making music.

polygon: Would you consider [D]edaken[Z] to be part of this movement?

@noiZe: No, I don't think we are. Maybe a lot of our fans are part of this movement and we like a lot of bands that are put into this genre (Ram-Zet or Dagoba for example), but music does not have to be in a special genre to be interesting for me and the most of our fans. Music should create impressions and play with our feelings.

L.O.S.: It just has to feel good. Some feel comfortable when they receive pain, some when they fuck with groups of teenage students and some when they are listening to our music.

polygon: As far as I know, you started as more or less common melody Black Metal act. What music had an influence on "Elektronoid"? Do you have any idea where this journey might end?

@noiZe: Puh...can't remember anymore. Of course we are influenced by other bands, feelings, weather, guitar amps, drugs, sex or whatever, but you don't think about a why....that's why we make music. If you say: "Hey maybe in this song, you must have been influenced by this or that?", I would say:

"Yeahh...maybe, but it's not important to me. Important is: There is this song and it sounds good to us, and it makes us feel like we wanted to feel, when we wrote it."

L.O.S.: exactly...

polygon: Lets go once more back to the digital revolution. The Internet offers a lot of possibilities for musicians like you and me. Platforms such as mp3.com or myspace provide a meta-level between artist and fan, where nobody really is dependent on a record deal to spread his or her ideas and visions. It's possible to reach a lot of people in different countries all over the world. This might be

seen as the total freedom of expression. Anyhow, I have very negative feelings about music as "User Generated Content". The value of art is decreasing as it is available at the push of a button. For me one should invest some effort in order to get music. One should walk out into the city, or at least call a mail-order and wait for something someone worked hard for with pure devotion. At least something should rotate when I listen to music and it shouldn't just exist of bits and bytes.

What are your feelings towards the invention of mp3 and "innovations" like myspace? As far as I know you published your album before the regular release on CD in the Internet. Why did you do that and what was your experience? Will you continue to first provide the music of [D]ekaden[Z] online?

L.O.S.: Yes you are right. I also prefer having music on a real CD with nice jewel case and booklet, but we have just entered the next generation. Most people of our generation have never seen a gramophone, those of the next generation will maybe never own a tape. The kids, growing up today are downloading their music via itunes on their ipod (we are not sponsored by apple!!!) or their mobile and nobody knows what comes next. We won't change that. Everything old will die one day and something new will be created. That's evolution.

polygon: When I saw your live appearance at the Nebelmond-Festival in Germany (with avant-garde godfathers ARCTURUS – lucky bastards!) after the concert some of you guys were sitting

lazy on chairs to enjoy some of the other bands. I remember thinking "These guys take their concept very serious". Is there any esoteric idea behind the name [D]ekaden[Z]? What does this word mean to you and how does decadence influence your lifestyle?

@noiZe: Decadence does not only influence our live, but the live of everyone in this time. It is the headline of our time somehow. Just think how much money you spent to stay alive and how much you spent to live.

polygon: Do you get any inspiration from philosophy and/or literature?

L.O.S.: You want me to say something like Nietzsche, right? No I'm sorry. Reality is the cruellest author. Of course we like philosophic literature but philosophy teaches to make your own thoughts, not to copy the ideas of other people. This is called religion.

@noiZe: Would you ask a philosopher if he is inspired by music?

polygon: What is the difference listening to your songs being on angel dust or in a sober condition?

@noiZe: Well, "elektronoid" was not written to be used with angel dust. It was written for LSD, but we realized that LSD is no more up to date, maybe we will produce our next longplayer for angel dust too. As limited edition maybe.

L.O.S.: Just try it out, you only need angel dust, sold by your local dealer, and "elektronoid", sold by us.

polygon: What is the reason for being before death's salvation?

L.O.S.: We are the once who asked this question. It is my job to ask it!!! ;)

@noiZe: Maybe the question, maybe there is no reason, but only the fact that we are here.

polygon: What is there going on nowadays in the [D]ekaden[Z]-camp? Are you working on a new album? Please give us a short overview about your future plans.

@noiZe: After we just deinstalled some of our band members, we are now working hard on our second longplayer. I've mixed down some previews of our preproduction for you and the community, and you will think that "elektronoid" sounds absurd compared to it.

L.O.S.: [D]ekaden[Z] are currently only @noiZe and me, and I really have to say things are working much better now. No compromises any more, no more discussions, the music we make is just what comes directly out of our minds. @noiZe is now playing guitar, and that's why we are writing our songs with guitars, drums and vocals first. The synths are added later. That has the amazing effect, that we just add parts to our songs, that are sounding like the sense of my lyrics, even if they are only played on guitar. We always tried to achieve this by using synths, in the past. When we now add the synthesizers, the orchestra or the digital drums, everything sounds so extreme, that you know what the song is about, even without vocals.

@noiZe: After we have finished song writing and preproduction, we will record the album. This will be around spring 2008.

We are happy that we got an endorsement with Laboga for guitar amps. Also we are looking forward to have a real drummer for the recordings. We are currently looking for musicians (2nd guitars, bass, drums) for live performance.

Last words to you!

@noiZe. If you can read this you have reached the end of this interview! What comes next in your life?

Polygon



LAIBACH

NSK Zagreb

LAIBACH LIVE at Tvornica Jedinstvo, Zagreb (Croatia) on November 23rd 2007

Yes, Laibach finally released a new album last year, it was a real twist in the whole story, just as some expected. Just as usually they managed to raise some people's temper by incorporating the ex-Yugoslavian anthem "Hej Slaveni" ("Hey Slavs") into their "Slovenia" track. This resulted in some minor accusations of Laibach suffering from yugonostalgia and being obsessed by communist ideas, the ideology of the same system which accused them of being Nazi some twenty years ago. An interesting history was given to us by this controversial and eccentric band...and they started touring this year, you might still catch them if you haven't.

Some half an hour before the beginning of



Laibach's performance some old yugoslavian (partisan) songs sung in Slovenian were played, whereas the last song being played was the Croatian anthem (they usually play the anthem of the country where they are performing on this tour). Of course all the people were quite confused, one half held their hand (occupied by beer) on their hearts, the other half were just standing still not knowing how to react. After this weird gesture the "Volk"

crew came on stage and started performing.

This was my first Laibach concert (I missed 3 opportunities up till now), this time they were touring to promote their great new album named "Volk". Those who are informed know that "Volk" deals with the achievements and meanings of some larger and smaller (but not less important) nations of the world. Their performance started off with "Germania", the first track on their new album. Just as expected from a known band, they had two video projectors on the stage, enhancing their performance by various inserts from their music videos or some rather hypnotizing playing around with their new "V" symbol and flags of various countries. To cut the setlist part short: most of the "Volk" songs were played with the exception of "Italia", "Nippon", and "Vaticanae". Now you want a few words about the atmosphere?! The feelings of the concert?! Well it's sometimes very hard to squeeze such a wide range of emotions on a sheet of paper, as they range from cynicism and satirical notes on "Anglia" and "America"

to some kind of weird euphoria on tracks like "Espana", "Yisra'el" and "Turkiye".

Every song/anthem possesses it's own mood, it holds a certain amount energy which moves or tranquilizes the masses. My personal favorite is "Anglia", a very bass driven and intense track great for live performance; I was enjoying so much I almost had a self-inflicted trip ;) like the ones people get on various dub gigs. A great surprise was how the whole new album doesn't

get stripped off while preformed live, like it happens to some bands, bit it's rather added a new feeling, it somehow seems more powerful and energetic live. As I mentioned, the first part of the concert was enhanced by the screening of flags and symbols of various countries they sang about, always combined with the "Volk" symbol.

In the break between the performances the NSK anthem was played and a mes-

sage encouraging people to become a part of NSK were screened. The second part brought a slight lineup change: the drummer was missing, their guest on "Volk" Boris Benko, was also gone, but the well known and loved percussionists Eva and Nataša were ready to handle their snares and cymbals, as well as the majority of the male audience. As you might have guessed they continued with "Tanz mit laibach", and other hits like "Alle gegen Alle" or "Das Spiel ist aus". From the very beginning of "Tanz..." to the Laibach medley aka. Turbo-Volk Mix (by iTurk) the crowd was dancing, mostly each person for himself within his half square meter. I was only truly disappointed because the setlist of the second part was mostly taken from "WAT", and all the older songs were incorporated in the medley. It seems that everyone who wants to see Laibach live, also wants to hear their track "Opus Dei", in my case it wasn't such a huge disaster (eventhough I love the song), as I was burning to hear "Geburt einer Nation", but life is life, and we don't always get everything we want.

Laibach is definitely one of those bands who sounds even more powerful live than in studio, even if you omitted the video screen, the lightshow and the female percussionists, you would be still left one of the greatest shows, of one of the most controversial bands to come out of Europe and such a small country as Slovenia. Laibach do not believe in individualism and being original, as they are obviously aware of how hard it is to be original these days, but the way they interpret certain themes and motives (anthems, songs) shows a great skill of sending a message of PEACE or protest wrapped in their unique style and never failing to find the right context.. Oh...and Laibach isn't one of those bands...Laibach....Laibach is Laibach.... tumtum tum tu-tuuuum

Photos by Shelley Jambresic -
www.metalpics.ch -
 thanks a lot for permission!

Ulv

DOL AMMAD

The Kings Of Space Metal Opera

Did you ever wonder how it would sound if epic progressive metal unified with exquisite synthesizers and electro sounds in the vein of 1970ies pioneers like Jean Michel

Jarre or Vangelis? And instead of a lead singer there was a whole classical choir performing the lyrics? Then DOL AMMAD definitely will become one of your greatest favourites ever.

When I first listened to them one year ago I was totally blown to another dimension somewhere in the mighty depths of space.

DOL AMMAD create unique, innovative music, epic landscapes of crystallizing sound. At the same time they manage the legerdemain of writing very catchy songs with big hit potential. The 21st century of metal has begun now. And DOL AMMAD show how the future may look like. So enter the intergalactic spaceship and beam to the planet of Thanasis Lightbridge, creative head and visionary of these mighty towers reaching up to the stars...





Thanasis, you've just returned from military service two months ago. Despite being at the army you found your own label Electronicartmetal Records and released your second masterpiece "Ocean Dynamics". How did you manage these musical activities during this whole year as a soldier? Was it difficult for you to promote "Ocean Dynamics"? Has military been an important experience for you personally or just a waste of time? How short is your hair now?

The last year has been hard for me, both with the problems with our previous record label going bankrupt and with my imminent army duties.

I am afraid the military service is still obligatory here in Greece and although now it lasts 12 months (it used to be 3 years in my father's days), it is still a distracting factor in a man's career and life, an obstacle that if you aren't willing to take your chances by wearing a blonde wig and act gay, you have to go through the hard way;-P

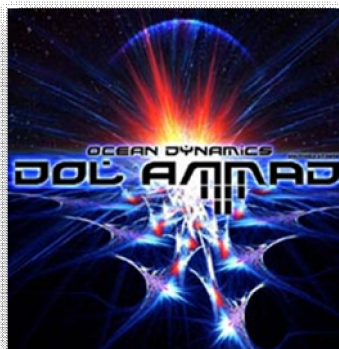
As an experience it makes you test yourself under strange situations, living without your comforts, away from your music, sleeping in a room with 60 unknown smelly guys, etc. It basically forces you to respect and appreciate all the tiny things in your everyday life that you take for granted. Thankfully throughout my service I met a lot of new friends and this for me is the only thing that made this time worthwhile. I hope Greece will start investing more money on education and social welfare than the military.

I miss my hair, I was long-haired for about 10 years and cutting it short after all this time was a strange experience! I scare myself every time I look in the mir-

ror ;-P Thankfully my hair grows back quickly, it is all over my eyes now already!

Through all this craziness of the last 12 months I had prepared our second album with Dol Ammad and was very anxious how and what to do to promote it. I suppose forming a personal record label was always in the back of my mind since this music is so unique and "different", it requires total artistic freedom and an innovative vision that very few labels display today. So once again I chose the hard way, formed "Electronicartmetal Records" and never looked back! It may be TONS of more work to do but it is really worth it. I have direct contact with the fans, the distros and the media and it is a very satisfying experience. Due to the limited free time I had in the army I couldn't explore my new label to its full potential, but now

I am back, I am psyched and working as hard as possible to expand its capabilities.



"Ocean Dynamics" is one of the most visionary albums I've ever been able to enjoy. On one hand it's very innovative and independent. On the other hand it's extremely catchy and has got a big hit potential. Can you imagine that Electronic Art Metal could become

music for the masses one day in the future? How have the reactions of the media and fans been so far?

Thank you for your kind remarks, I am honoured that you feel this way about my music! It's true that although I try to create something really different and experimental, at the same time I don't want to end up with music that is inaudible and would only serve as an experimental salad in a museum :-P I don't know however if Electronica Art Metal will ever be music for "the masses" but that doesn't really concern me as I rarely seem to agree or

act in conjunction with what "the masses" think and do. I make music basically for my own pleasure and for other adventurous co-travellers that I discover along the way! Only with these devoted friends is this journey of music discovery worthwhile and doesn't end up being just some shallow music with lifestyle-strings attached.

Can you tell us more about the lyrical concept of "Ocean Dynamics"? In her review Katja speculated that it could be a Journey from outer space into our solar system and finally descending into the oceans of planet earth. In other articles I've read that it's a science-fiction concept about a water planet. What's really the story behind? Is it somehow connected to the concept of your debut "Star Tales"?

Yes, just as in "Star Tales", the lyrics of "Ocean Dynamics" are science fiction stories but this time theme-based around the liquid element, the power of the seas. I live in a sea-dominated country and city so the liquid element is vital for my life. I really can't imagine myself living away from the sea. The "Thalassa Dominion" story that mainly dominates the album is about an aquatic race living in a water planet. They are the spores of an ancient space tribe whose actions resulted in the devastation and corruption of the liquid element through the eras. This time I worked together with a good friend who writes these kinds of short-stories and we had a great time coming up with aquatic space themes! I like to have a different "theme" for each album although I must confess that I am not such a fan of lyrics in general. I rarely read the lyrics in bands' booklets; I always focus on the music no matter if the band speaks about cosmic epic battles or how to make a cheesecake ;-P However, I am a sucker for all things sci-fi related so I think that my music will always have a space flavour.

DOL AMMAD is a huge collective con-

sisting of a 14 member classical choir, 2 session members on vocals and drums, 2 band members on guitars and bass and finally Thanasis Lightbridge, yourself, as the mastermind. To what extent would you call DOL AMMAD a band? How much are the others involved in the creative process? Are you doing all the songwriting and arrangements alone or do the others take part in that?

Dol Ammad is not a band in the typical form. I don't distinguish members as "session" or "band" members. It is true that I compose all the music and control everything in the creative process but this doesn't diminish the role of any of the participants. I like to think of Dol Ammad's albums as movies where I am the director and the rest of the guys and girls are actors and technical crew! I have



a personal dream and vision with my music, but you need people to make the dream come true. I am grateful that I work with such talented personalities.

Is it difficult to work with so many musicians? You have to do lots of coordination and motivation work. Is this something that goes easy for you?

It can be difficult to coordinate all those people and arrange all the parts but I like the challenge. Through this process I have learned a lot and already in "Ocean Dynamics" I used experience I had gained in "Star Tales" to make the job better and easier. However I do plan to use a more compact group of people for the third Dol Ammad album.

The choir consists of 7 women and 7 men. Do they sing exclusively for DOL AMMAD? Or are they a professional choir that also does other performances?

Most of them are professional choristers and soloists in various choirs and solo acts in Greece. Some are even teachers of

solo and choral singing and most have participated in the biggest opera and symphonic events in Greece. I am privileged to be surrounded by such great musicians.

Great musicians and also very good looking, at least when it comes to the women. Did the optical aspect play a certain role in your choices? Or did you spice up the band picture with some photo models ;-P? Or is it just that Greek women look very beautiful in general for the eyes of North Europeans?

Hehe, of course Greece has very beautiful women and the band picture actually depicts the singers and not some models! LOL! But I understand your point of view since when I visit Northern Europe I think that all the women are amazingly beautiful there! You see we are more used to brunette – brown eyed beauties and feel that blue eyes – blonde hair are more "exotic", so this must have the vice-versa effect on you ;-P But to get back to the music, beauty has and should have nothing to do with singing skills and music nature of a person and a band. I am totally against the countless bands seeking pretty faces to front their band. I mean why should I buy a musically shallow CD just because they have a great looking girl on the covers, videos etc? This is targeted to brain-less listeners and shares the same principles as all those advertisements that display babes and sexual innuendos in everything from yoghurt to car tyres! I want nothing to do with that and I wish the same for our listeners too.

You came into contact with drummer Alex Holzwarth (Rhapsody, Sieges Even) through a common friend. What made you choose him, especially since you are a drummer yourself? Was it difficult

to convince him for DOL AMMAD? Will he also play on your future releases?



Especially since I am also a drummer and drums are my second biggest passion after synthesizers, I wanted the best possible drums for my music. Alex Holzwarth was a hero to me for many years and didn't think twice when I had the chance to get in contact with him. It wasn't difficult to convince him; he just requested to check the music first. I was honoured by his participation and I hope to work again with him in the future as he is a great

person and phenomenal drummer!

Some people see similarities between DOL AMMAD and Rhapsody, because the drumming of Alex is so characteristic. What do you think about that?

It is true that in the power metal songs of Dol Ammad there are similarities in the playing style of the drums but this can be said for any power metal band. We are also often told that Dol Ammad have similarities with Therion due to the use of a choir. I am a fan and respect both of these bands but I think that Dol Ammad are doing something totally different. What will always distinguish us are the use of electronics and the adventurous compositions, things that I don't ever plan to compromise.

For "Star Tales" the drums of Alex Holzwarth have been produced in Germany's Gate Studio. In the photo album on your webpage you are drinking a Kakao in Porschestrasse 1 in Wolfsburg and also have some fun with the bears of Berlin. How did you like Germany?

Haha! Oh yes, I had a great time in Germany! I stayed there for 2 weeks and it was awesome! I visited Wolfsburg, Gifhorn, Berlin, Hamburg and Hanover. I have lots of friends there, I cooperate with German musicians and German companies, and I feel very close to this country!



If only I had the time to learn the language...! As for the Kakao, people who know me are aware that I drink more milk than water ;-P



So the next DOL AMMAD album probably will become a concept album about a milk planet ;-)?

LOL! Great idea! In fact I always look for something to honour the great existence of milk. Maybe I should write a song like "Calcium" or "Dominion of the Holy Cows" (In 14 parts) ;-P

Can you tell us how you manage the whole recording process? For "Star Tales" you've recorded some parts in Germany. For "Ocean Dynamics" did you do everything in your own studio - recording, mixing and mastering? Has the choir been recorded as a whole with some stereo microphones or each singer separately?

Yes, in "Ocean Dynamics" all the production took place in my studio in Thessaloniki, Greece. I used various techniques for the choir and for this album I think it is easy to notice that the recording quality is better than the debut. I like to record both the whole and each voice separately (3 to 4 people at a time). For the third album I

plan to use some new techniques I have come up with.

The sound of "Ocean Dynamics" is marvellous. Do you have lots of high-end technique in your studio? Or are you one of those clever producers who manage to create excellent sound with small and cost-effective technical means? How does your studio look like?

Thanx! I have some high-end equipment but they are nothing compared to huge commercial studios. In my studio I work together with my good friend Argy Stream with whom we share a common passion for detail and fidelity. We take care of every little detail and use various techniques that in the end give you a great result without having to sell your house just to buy that special esoteric pre-amp! Having said that, the studio is always expanding and upgrading and we are now open to creative bands or musicians who'd like to use our experience and equipment for their work. I get this request a lot so I will soon also post photos of the studio in our website.

You are influenced by the great synthesizer pioneers of the 1970ies like Jean Michel Jarre or Vangelis. Do you use some original analog gear from those times like Arp or Moog? Or do you mostly work with software plugins? What do you think about all the new software emulations of analog gear?

I have analog and virtual-analog synthesizers which I love! I am not a big fan of plugins and soft-synths although I do use them a lot also. I think in the recent years the quality of soft synths has been greatly improved but I believe more in the power of software libraries than just software for analog emulations. If you've grown up with MIDI and hands on control of a synthesizer I don't think you'll ever be fully satisfied by a plugin and a mouse or even with a controller having to map everything and create scenes etc. Although I do use all the latest technologies and stay up to date with the music tech progress, I witness that I tend to go back to simpler and older techniques the last years. I think that it is easy to lose control with technology and to miss the whole point of music making.

Yes, that's absolutely true. Many musicians are loosing themselves in gear-slutting and drown in the new possibilities that modern technology offers them. But even if you are using your gear wisely it can rob you much time. You told me that you had a computer crash in your studio that blocked your work for weeks. Do you sometimes wish to make music purely without having to dig between countless cables, plugs, knobs and electronic labyrinths? Maybe like in the past when composers had a piano, some sheets of paper and then gave the scores to an orchestra? Or like in the future when the head-to-midi-converter (a vision of TT/Abigor) makes the music stream directly from your head out of the loudspeakers?



LOL! Head-to-midi?! I would prefer Head-to-CD-Factory but we'll have to start from somewhere ;-P Seriously though we as mankind are really in our very early baby-steps in technology and have a lot way to go. Yes, I had an unfortunate and simultaneous crash in 2 of the 3 computers in the studio and I had some difficult 3 weeks trying to save the work and bring back order into chaos. Thankfully nothing was lost except for the time delay and some thousands nerve-cells in my brain. It is true that I push these machines to their extremes but you should never count and rely 100% on them. I think back-up and restoration plans should be top priorities in computer environments. I am not sure if the composers of the past were always fully satisfied by the way their "tools" performed their music, a "crash" in an orchestra would be maybe a drunken violinist ;-P

I do sometimes wish I could make music more easily and every time I play on a classical piano I am amazed by its purity and natural form. However I am afraid I am trapped forever in my electronic labyrinths and there is no turning back now...

You also like Mike Oldfield. I think you both share this peaceful, positive mood in your songs and also the catchy melodies. Did you ever think about experimenting with folk or classical instruments like him? Maybe not for DOL AMMAD, but for other projects?

Oh yes, in Dol Theeta! There is a lot of experimentation with ethnic instruments, mainly bagpipes, violins, flutes. I love the sound of bagpipes it is the most captivating folk instrument in the world. I also plan to make a sample library of a great Greek folk instrument when I have the time. It is an instrument that few people know in the world and of course there are no libraries for it. I have found a great player of this instrument and when I have time we will meet in the studio to construct a virtual instrument for it!



Can you tell us more about DOL THEETA? You will also play drums for it. And your homepage says that it will concentrate on your meditative and atmospheric sides. When can we expect the debut album? And what can we expect?

Yes I also play the drums in Dol Theeta and it is turning out a HUGE album! I thought it would be an easier production compared to Dol Ammad and everyone was like "ok, now you are 3 people only, this production will be shorter" but the songs are very lengthy, deep in emotions and feelings and have tricky orchestrations. I am not even sure what to expect of the debut album... Just like with "Star Tales" we will start from somewhere to try to find ourselves through it. The plan for Dol Theeta was conceived when I started infusing lots of meditative and softer/ambient parts in Dol Ammad and didn't feel satisfied with it... I mean I want Dol Ammad to be in one word "EPIC"! So I decided that electronica-art-metal must be portrayed by more than one band and thus Dol Theeta was born. I am really happy with the result and also very anxious to see what the final outcome will be. The music is so narcotic, you dive into the songs and sometimes you dive too deep it gets scary...It is an electrifying inner journey that defies limits and structures.

You are going to do a video clip for it. Can you reveal anything about it?

Yes I think I can now reveal the first steps of the Dol Theeta world. I have decided to release a single before the full album. The single will be for a song called "Goddess" and it will also include our first ever video clip! We are currently working on the Graphics for the video with the help of my greatest friend who is an expert in Com-

puter Programming. I am really excited to see the final result!

And did you ever think about creating a "negative twin" of DOL AMMAD with a dark and dissonant basic mood? I mean you already had some dramatic, furious and dissonant parts on "Ocean Dynamics". But in general the mood is very positive and makes you feel good and optimistic even in dark hours.

Of course! It is the third "Dol" in the world of Electronica – art- metal, a third project that will appear in the near future! There was an innuendo about it in my message on our website when I announce Dol Theeta but few people noticed it ;-P Anyway, yes I have a VERY darker side which I can't wait to express and share with our friends. It is when this third "Dol" project comes out that our listeners will finally have the total picture of my music and understand my vision. All I can say now is that it will be something really extreme, an audio-violence experience that will amaze and shock you!

Will this probably go a bit into the direction of "Thalassa Dominion IV"? There are several very dramatic and dissonant parts in this song and also some hyperspeed blastbeats?

Yes there will be inhuman blastbeats in this darker project but it will be nothing like Thalassa Dominion IV, you really haven't heard anything like this before... If Dol Ammad sound unique, then this is ages more alien to the ears. It is an audio violence that scares the hell out of all my friends when they visit me while I work on this stuff ;-P Imagine the cruellest grind-gore death metal band but with an electronica speedcore instrumentation! But that's for the future to come... ;)

You seem to be a very spiritual man. I read somewhere that you are practising Yoga and also have a certain interest in topics like astrology. What do you think about so called esotericism? Of course you can also choose another word for it, since "esotericism" has been misused a lot within the past decades.

I am a man that thinks a lot, in every second of my life my brain is in constant thoughts and ideas and in day-dream-imaginings. I often suffer from insomnia, megalomania and lack of concentration into what is known as "real life". I always compare everything that happens to mega-cosmic and micro-cosmic scales and this can be very tiring sometimes especially when you try to relax. I am very interested in Yoga but not so much in astrology. Maybe you confused it with astronomy which is a fascinating science. Regarding esotericism, as in knowledge that few can grasp and remember, I think we are heading towards ages of esotericism since the huge clueless masses are undereducated in a world where

knowledge is so freely and easily available. You can see it in all aspects of life, music – art – politics – society. An elite-few in a world of zombies...

With mega-cosmic and micro-cosmic scales to you mean thinking in fateful analogies? Like e.g. bears escape from the zoo in several American cities and at the same time a bear market arises at the New York Stock Exchange? And you think there may be a secret relationship between those coincidences, an analogical relationship between microsphere and macrosphere?

Yes and no at the same time. Even the words "Yes" and "No" which often carry the result of a decision can be a microsphere and macrosphere respectively. My mind drifts helplessly through thoughts like when I make a cup of coffee at the same time a supernova blasts a star into shock waves of energy. This fusion was the result of years of the star's aging under which star a centipede on earth is devouring a rat or a mother scorpion is carrying its first scorplings on her back.

It's this constant zoom-ins and outs that go on inside me...I can't know if they mean anything or if there is a secret relationship between them... It would be scary if there was.

Can insomnia be an inspiring state of mind for you? Do you often create music while being sleepless and overtired? Or is it more a state of mind where you cannot concentrate on proper musical work anymore?

Yes I am creative when I am tired and stressed. But it starts to have an impact on my health, I can't remember the last time I was relaxed mentally...

You said you aren't a big fan of song lyrics. What about books? Do you have any favourite authors? Or do you prefer sound over word in general?

Oh no, I love books! My favourite authors are Douglas Adams and Phillip Pullman. I just don't pay that much attention to words when I listen to music. It is a



whole different experience. I do prefer to listen to music in my free time but I often try to steal some time for a good book also.

The South Park version of the famous DOL AMMAD band picture is great. Are you a South Park fan or did you just like the idea of having a funny caricature of DOL AMMAD? Which musician's cartoon do you like most? I think DC Cooper is portrayed very well.

Yes I love South Park! Our good friend Ntennis Papakostas had this idea to do a South Park version of Dol Ammad using online software that someone has created. Ntennis sent me an email asking for my permission and for some details of the members! Like who have blue eyes etc! I think he did an amazing work and reproduction of the entire band but I can't stop laughing with Alex Holzwarth and his bongos! I also like my lightsaber ;-P

Okay, Thanasis, thank you a lot for the

CARRIER FLUX

Warrior On The Edge Of Time

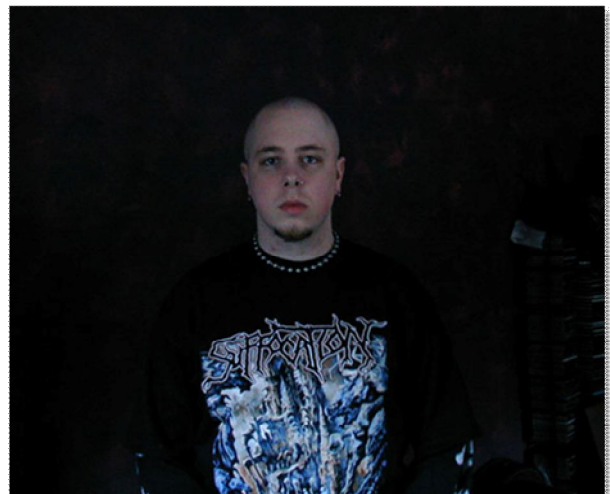
There are many bands and artists currently proclaiming to be the advance guard of metal, and many more being heralded as such by the critics and the fans. But once past the hype and upon listening to the music, few seem deserving of such praise. Everything has been done and done better before it seems. Once in a while a light of pure artistic vision permeates this quagmire, bringing forth a truly original sound and taking metal places it has'nt been before.

One such visionary is Jeff aka Carrier Flux, a studio project that embraces diversity, heaviness and darkness in its multifaceted sound. It refuses to be pigeonholed, instead bounding forward into the unknown with each release. Jeff has unleashed 2 killer albums to date and is presently hard at work on the third one. I am especially excited beacause he gives very few interviews and this a sort of www.avantgarde-metal.com exclusive.

very pleasurable conversation. I am sure we'll talk again soon on your forthcoming works in 2008. The last words belong to you.

Thank you Chrystof and the rest of the AGM crew for the amazing support and pure friendship! It was an honour and one of the best interviews I've experienced. I would also like to thank all our fellow music travellers and to ask their patience for the upcoming Dol Theeta releases. Various reasons beyond my powers made it impossible for me to make a 2007 release. What I can promise is that in the first months of 2008 you will be presented with a massive album. A huge music adventure of space melodies and inner emotions that I am sure you'll love. To my ears it feels like the best music I've written so far in my life. I wish you all the best for the New Year, may you live free and happy and may you never stop dreaming! Space on! =)

Chrystof



First of all, kudos on releasing an amazingly original and diverse extreme metal album in In Waste (2002). Though more than 5 years old now, it still sounds fresh and cutting edge today, the true mark of all great music. How long have you been playing music? What band(s) were you playing in before Carrier Flux ? Did you align yourself with any particular scene?

I've been writing and recording music for about 16 years. I started by recording songs on a four track with a drum machine, and when I was about 16 I joined a

thrash band who I played with for about a year. A couple years later I also started playing in a band called cold colors, a melodic metal band from Minneapolis. Some time after that, I performed with and recorded a few albums in a dark ambient group called Vedisni. Throughout all of this I was slowly working out the ideas that became Carrier Flux. I never aligned myself with any particular scene, but when Carrier Flux first started evolving, I was definitely most influenced by black metal.

What inspired you to form Carrier Flux ? Did the freedom and focus of having a 100% solo project have something to do with it?

The project first started out as a means to get ideas down on tape, but I found myself finishing songs and eventually albums; and began to really enjoy the act of concentrating all my energy on making music with no distractions. There's always a trade-off when doing everything yourself of gaining freedom but losing input from other artists, but I've found that working on my own is the best way for me to be productive.

What were your thoughts (as best you can recall) during the recording of the band's debut , Introspective Nighmare



(2000) ? Did you achieve the goals you set out to achieve? One can hear the beginnings of a very original sound, part Death/Black Metal, part gothic / death folk, and part industrial metal.

When I was fleshing out the ideas for that album I was listening to a lot of industrial and blackmetal. I really wanted to mix the two without compromising the emotional content of either style. I didn't have any specific goals, other than to make interesting music that conveyed a certain feeling. I'd like to think I achieved those goals.

The transition of sound between the first and second album in terms of production and composition is astounding. Was 2000-2002 a period of major musical progression for you?

In between the first and second albums, I just had a lot more focus on what I wanted to accomplish. I made a few gear purchases, and made improvements at using what I had.

How has your recording set-up changed over the years ? What is your basic rig, in terms of hardware and software?

I've very gradually improved my setup by purchasing equipment when I can afford it. I try to keep things pretty basic as far as gear goes. A couple of decent mics, a couple synths, a good mic preamp, a hardware compressor and EQ, and a good guitar rig are pretty much all I rely on besides software. One major improvement I made since the recording of the first two albums, was purchasing a Mesa guitar amplifier. I was using a solid-state amp previously, and I believe the new recordings I'm working on have a much fuller sound, partially as a result of this.

When Black Lotus folded up, was it a tough period for you?

Things had gone sour with Black Lotus before they started having problems, so this really wasn't an issue for me.

Seeing that you have offered both your albums for free download, despite being available on CD, what are your thoughts on the internet's impact on music and the music industry?

Well first off the major labels have to get their shit together and work with the Internet instead of against it. Charging a dollar per song on iTunes is ridiculous, and the RIAA suing its consumer base absolutely has its head up its ass. People will pay for music if there is a reasonable distribution method, and a reasonable price being charged for the product.

As far as the impact that the Internet has had on music, it's a really tough question. Many lesser-known groups have had an easier time getting their music out to the fans who want to hear it, and at the same time many groups have lost money due to music piracy. From my perspective music is art, and shouldn't be made with the promise of financial reward in the first place. The minute the integrity of the group is compromised for the sake of selling more records, is the moment where artistic vision and creativity are strangled and destroyed. So in that frame of mind I almost see sucking money out of the system as a good thing. Obviously it would be fantastic to make a living off music, but that's difficult to do without ignoring the artistic aspect of the music. So I have hope that the Internet may inadvertently restore some sense of integrity to modern music.

Can you give us some details about your distribution deal with CDBaby ?

I do recommend CDBaby to independent artists. They've been easy to deal with and help a great deal with online distribution. Basically they sell the CDs you've pressed, and distribute your album to online subscription services, and grant you a very reasonable Cut of the profits. Ultimately I definitely prefer working with a label, however CDBaby is definitely a good option.

Will Carrier Flux ever expand into the band format, and is there a possibility of this metal madness ever being taken to stage?

I don't like to speak in absolutes, but for now the plans for the project are only to record as much music as possible. I may incorporate other musicians but it will be a while before any sort of live act comes to fruition.

Given the excellent variety of vocals on

all your songs, who are your biggest influences in terms of vocals? Also, which bands inspired you start making your own music?

My biggest influences on vocals were probably early Arcturus and Ved Buens Ende. At the very beginning of my creative ventures back in the early 90s, my influences were probably Sepultura, Megadeth, Slayer, and Primus.

Having heard the new demo, Carrier Flux again seems to be expanding its sonic palette. Where do you expect to see your project in 5 -10 years?

I really have no plans other than to keep making music. I want to keep the project unique, but not try and force originality at the cost of writing cohesive music.

Are you involved in any other projects at the moment ?

Right now I'm working with a thrash band, and an industrial group. I've also been dabbling with a few different styles other than those, but carrier flux remains my primary focus.

Any other cutting edge metal outfits you would recommend to our readers ?



There are far too many to list, but lately I've been listening to Skeletonwitch, Defleshed, Genghis Tron, Windir, Evoken, Skepticism, Esoteric, Sonata Arctica, and Strapping Young Ladd. I've been really getting into thrash and funeral doom lately. Doom metal seems to be where it's at

these days to avoid commercialism. Bands like Tyranny, Skepticism, Evoken, and Esoteric have a really legitimate feel to them; and obviously put their music before their image.

Suleiman

REVIEWS

ABORYM

Fire Walk With Us

Release: 2001

Label: Scarlet / SPV

Avantgenre: A Gross Mélange Of Satanic Industrial-soundscapes And Disruptive Black Metal

Duration: 51:33

Origin: Italy

Official site: <http://www.aborym.net>



Rome: Center of the Catholic Church and domicile of the pope. This devotional ambience is not supposed to be the right place to deliver a satanic and misanthropic Black Metal-Band. But maybe it is exactly the Holy Ghost who surrounds the Italian metropolis, which gave birth to the blasphemous, and in every sense insurgent character of Aborym. "Fire Walk With Us" is the second opus of this drug-influenced cartel. In my eyes it represents the bible of industrialised, modern and (to satisfy this website) vanguard Black Metal.

From the very beginning this album attracts the attention of the victim. The comparatively transparent production creates a futuristic and clinical atmosphere. A dominant element of the sound is the drum machine, which is well programmed and demonstrates the musical talent of these Romans. Driven by the digital drums, the guitars celebrate an ecstatic orgy of modern Black Metal in

every track (beside the techno-like "Here Is No God S.T.A."). Most tracks are quite complex, but the guitar-magicians Nysrok and Sethlands manage to keep the flow in every second on "Fire Walk With Us".

Songs like "Our Sentence" and "Total Black" are charged with fast tremolo-picking as well as meditative staccato riffs and dramatic, monumental and opera-like guitar eruptions. You will find no single arrangement on this record which appears artificial: The compositions seem to have been written millennia ago by a metaphysical entity and Aborym, in the year 2000, only represents the earthly tool to create what ever existed.

The prophet of these transcendent visions is Attila Csihar, notorious for his work with "the true" Mayhem and legendary Tormentor from Hungary. The collaboration with Aborym shows his urge to experiment with different styles of extreme music and to break through boundaries. His

performance can best be described with two words: Sick and alien. Csihar alters his voice quite often and accommodates his style to the emotional development of each song. The listener gets terrorised by high-pitched, aggressive Black Metal vok-ills as well as with the shamanic and ad-juratory expression we all know from "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas".

"Fire Walk With Us" represents the perfect mélange of unsettled industrial sounds, dark ambient and Scandinavian influenced Black Metal. The latter aspect is

also underlined by their felicitous interpretation of "Det Som En Gang Var" by Burzum.

Sure the Italians can not be counted as the inventors of Industrial Black Metal. But compared with their Norwegian colleagues (and role models) Mysticum they travel farther into the abyss of the human psyche. A success which is achieved by a highly professional attitude and admirable mental power.

Polygon

ABORYM

With No Human Intervention

Release: 20. January 2003

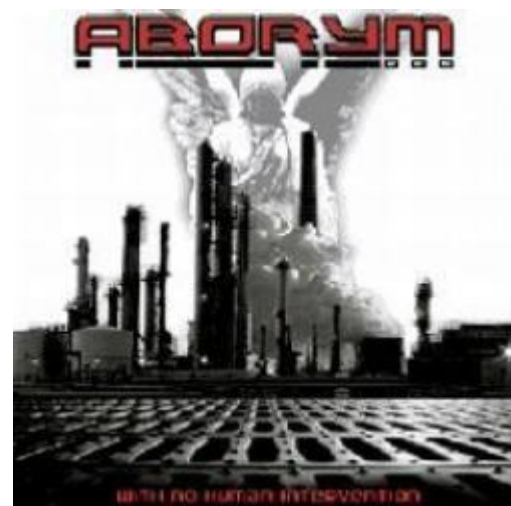
Label: [Code666](#)

Avantgenre: Alienated Black Metal Fiction

Duration: 64:49

Origin: Italy

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/aborym666>



With their third album "With No Human Intervention" the Italian Avantgarde Black Metal freaks of Aborym rose again from the deepest abyss of human psychological nightmare to show the world once more what misanthropic metal art is all about. After the quite interesting, but heavily underestimated "Kali-Yuga Bizarre" and the follower "Fire Walk With Us", this album represents their peak.

After a short introduction the chaos of alien musical dimensions hits the clueless listener. From the beginning the title track shows what the art of Aborym is all about: Fast, disruptive (digital) drums, epic guitar chords, lightspeed solos and ecstatically dancing synthesisers, which are drawing never heard collages of sound. The general atmosphere created by the dominating electronic ingredients is very unfriendly, cold and confusing, but coeval the music has an appealing effect. One reason might be Attila Csihar, who once again proved on this longplayer, that he

can be considered as one of the most unique and extreme vocalist in the metal scene. Unlike on "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas" or "Fire Walk With Us", the Hungarian drug addict abandoned his trademarks and, in a sense, sounds less shamanic. Instead we can experience high pitched Black Metal screams, which can only be described as matchless and supernatural. It is very refreshing to hear Csihar experimenting with his pervert voice.

The songwriting first appears quite progressive, abstruse and cryptic. But after some time, when the Homo Sapiens got used to the celestial way of communicating, the tracks develop a logic structure, with which Aborym manage to switch masterly between the uttermost different human emotions and states of mind. Regardless if we get attacked by modern, industrial-rock influenced stakato riffing, if we are terrorised by digital warfare of the strangest Techno/EBM and

Industrial sounds or if Nysrok demonstrates his musical skills with his breathtaking guitar-solos: The sound cosmos of these Italian guys is always in a crossfire of different influences. Even Black'n Roll is cited ("The Alienation of a Blackened Soul"). The music is mostly connected to the old spirit of Black Metal, which was invented on Norwegian classics like the mentioned "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas" and "Antichrist".

Talking about the production, which took place in Temple of Noise Studio in Rome, I must say that I first had problems getting used to it. Especially the drumcomputer might discourage the blimpish Black Metal fan. But in the end the sound fits in very well the overall inhuman feeling of the music. I must add, that "With No Human Intervention" although features some nice and emotional moving parts. But every time these excursions to the brighter side of life appear, they get undermined by one of Csihar's choleric scream attacks.

The lyrics are also quite opaque. It is nearly impossible to find a clear structure, an overall message. Of course you will find the typical antichristian propaganda. With "Faustian Spirit Of The Earth" (which was written by Bård "Faust" Eithun) the band tries to offer a more religious and philosophical approach towards life and humanity. "Me(n)tal Striken Terror Action 2" deals with the 9.11 terror attacks, which is quite unusual for this type of music.

After all praise I have to state that "With No Human Intervention" has also two defects: First, the booklet doesn't fit the high standard of the music. The obligatory number of the beast in the logo as well as the pictures of naked nuns going nude with the crucifix between their legs really doesn't impress anyone anymore. It seems like Aborym, by now grown-up men, still have a hard time to get rid of the old-fashioned and boring clichés.

The second defect for me is the obvious need of Aborym to adorn with "big names". Several times we can read in the booklet about the co-operation with Faust, Nattefrost (Capathian Forest) and Irrumator (Anaal Nathrakh). Sure this underlines the integrity and credibility of this band within the extreme metal scene, but Aborym really don't need this type of self-adulation.

To come to a conclusion: Aborym have found their own interpretation to celebrate a style of music which was important and inspiring for a whole generation of angry musicians. Most of them failed to offer something new, refreshing. However, for me Aborym is the only band which successfully managed to combine styles like Techno, Electronic Body Music and Industrial with Extreme Black Metal. A vanguard approach which can't be honoured enough. At least I tried it.

Polygon

ABSTRUSE

Transgression

Release: 2007

Label: Self-released

Avantgenre: Cerebral Death Experiments

Duration: 32:25

Origin: Greece

Official site: <http://www.abstruseweb.com/>



Transgression is the first release from this ambitious Greek duo, formed back in 2002. Veiled and Substant, sharing the vocal, visual and musical duties, states a

pretty bold mission objective - to fuse extreme metal's eerie darkness, the strange tonal systems of modern art music (serialism, atonal and tone scales et c) and psy-

chedelic visual art, in order to walk down a new musical path. Indeed, pretty ambitious for a band's first release, and before listening it mostly seemed pretentious and rather silly. But... I was very, very wrong. The music of Abstruse (a synonym of "obscure", it seems) is extremely experimental, though it rarely leaves a metallic context. Their claiming of using the dis-harmonic scales of 20th century avantgardist composers is definitely no ostentatious bullshit, among the dark metal riffs (a fair reference should be early progressive death metal) I can hear not only traces of Schönberg's Twelve-tone technique, but a distinct use of it; programmed melodies intertwine with guitar sweeps, melodies are turned inside out, played in reverse, everything those Germans did back in the angst ridden 1920's. The dreamy whole tone scales of Debussy add a misty surreal veil to the chaotic dodecaphony... But still, they never leave the metallic course. Bloody awesome? Indeed! The opener hints both to the crazy electro-jazz of Last-Minute Lies-era Fleurety and to the playfulness of the Atrox guitarists. The slightly slower "Ceremonial Torches" brings to mind a dark mix of Karl Sanders mythological solo works and The Resi-

dents (!!!). The guitar lines at points resemble the works of Carl-August Tide-mann before joining Winds (i.e. Arcturus)... but enough references. Is it strange? Yes. Great? YES. Few can achieve music as technically stunning as this, without simultaneously losing my interest. Very cerebral. I like that.

The vocals are pretty strange, deep half-roared whispers most of the time. The programmed drums might annoy some, but they merge naturally with the overall technological sound; only the blastbeats sounds plastic. What I also like is the visuals accompanying some of the songs on a DVD. Psychedelic as hell, blurry shots of nature flowing into each other in many pretty colours (a lot of colour inversion and that kind of stuff). I'm an ignorant when it comes to video art, but I know what I enjoy. This, for example. If you are in any way interested in experimental, groundbreaking or just highly technical music, you want to hear this. This will definitely not be the last you'll hear from Abstruse.

aVoid

AUN

Multigone

Release: 2008

Label: [Crucial Blast](#)

Avantgenre: Blight Metal

Duration: 57:35

Origin: Montreal (CA)

Official

site: <http://www.myspace.com/martindumais>



.....
From Montreal - Canada - I recently discovered an artist whom I thought everyone interested in extreme/experimental and

noise/ambient music should get acquainted with. Martin Dumais, aka AUN, before turning into the twisted sound wiz-

ard he has become, was also secretly active in Montreal's underground techno, tech house and downtempo scenes, for example with his band Les Jardiniers (The Gardeners). But back to our business, his last album *Multigone* has just been released by Crucial Blast, and it definitely has something strongly atmospheric going on, as Dumais is handling guitars, bass, violin and electronics altogether, to create a borderline ambient/metal majestic piece of work. The first two tracks *Multigone* and *Consumed by Flies* are massive, heavy, drone-dirge, epic fire brails of alienated textures. Both songs might as well burn your brain and leaves you breathless and self-consumed. If you ask me, this doesn't only bears the mark of an extreme noise take on volcano drone metal, but it also, like on the magickal *Steel Skull Plain*, investigates through surrealistic and psychedelic dark industrial ambient figures. It's limitless music so to speak or as to breeze out unclear - whatever linguistics you prefer.

Surprisingly, next song *Stables* sounds like backward Stoner rock on ecstasy. Its very fluid like, and yet the badass rocking feeling is all over the place and growing more and more weirded out. And as the song is dissolving, *Halfmoon Halfchoke* takes the next lead and shines through its shimmering, blazing, fuzzy, slumbering, drony, hypnotizing, blissed-out, foggy and celestial ambient ascension. *Palejoy* then exposes a more beatlord side of AUN, and I must say I'm quite impressed: at some point, I was even thinking to myself that this was like some kind of Psyche Doomic Trip Hop or something. The guitars sound saturated, eerily industrial, reminding me

of a rusty, bubbling, phosphorescent mire, while the deep bass line groove underneath is perfectly assembled in a way you can't resist to head nod along the strong atmosphere. Last song *Kwelbo Krong* goes back to more noise territory covering, which includes many other extraterrestrial influences. Add to that a very oppressive quality within the guitar noise riffing and it easily gets both overloaded and meditative at the same time. *Contradictio*? None at all. Extreme music the way AUN does it basically crosses, sometimes many, sometimes quite a few dense and highly compacted emotions against each other, to the point where it just feels naturally encompassing.

From zero to infinity, I might easily say that *Multigone*, as an album, conveys and maximizes the darker spirits of Extreme metal, while actually keeping up with psychedelism in sculpture and avant ambient/noise in texture and genre. With this album, Dumais really captured an organised, organic and otherworldly vision, only to let us experience its spectral liveliness. By the way, *Multigone* is limited to 300 copies so in case you would want to experience it at home, act fast! And for those who would enjoy discovering the specifically drone/ambient side-brother of AUN, way more minimal than what I described in this review, I suggest you click on the record's name, if you want to download the free four songs mp3-album FIELD, which was released by Clinical Archives in 2007. This hasn't made as much an impact on me as *Multigone* did, but it's another facet to AUN's unpredictable art.

Oliver Side

AZURE EMOTE

Chronicles Of An Aging Mammal

Release: July 7th, 2007

Label: [Epidemie Records](#)

Avantgenre: Experimental Electro Death

Duration: 47:08

Origin: USA

Official site: <http://www.azureemote.com/>



*Again and again, a shocking reminder.
Face to face, we've never been blinder.*

An eight-armed primate, poised as a Hindu deity. Dressed in suit, with a crown of thorns, an anthropomorphic brute wielding a skull, a knife, an inverted cross, a gun, and justice. The world is slowly being flooded by a second deluge; fish and birds roam freely about the ruins and carcass of mankind. Religious zeal and shallow faith in technology, our end. It is quite clear what AZURE EMOTE's feelings toward their fellow humanity are. *Chronicles Of An Aging Mammal* is the first and so far only release from this obscure brain child of one Mike Hrubovcak, vocalist of death metal monsters like VILE and MONSTROSITY among others, now completed as a trio.

A cinematic explosion of apocalyptic metal, brutal grindcore, symphonic death and black metal, industrial noise and ambience, trip-hop, weird samples; you are as easily dragged into this chaotic flurry of noises and genres as you are thrown out of it, and you will never know what hit you or understand what actually happened. The chaos of an Abigor drenched in trippy electronica; the sedative melancholy of oceanic trip-hop metal akin to KorovaKill, or perhaps a coastal Lux Occulta. The drummer from RUMPELSTILTSKIN GRINDER adds a persuasive layer of, well, brutalized deathgrind. Vocals ranging from pig-styled squeals and morbid deathgrunts to the wonderfully soothing yet dissonant jazz and operatic goth of TO DESBONDEN's Laurie Ann Haus to reversed chants and samples. Mostly grunts

and growls though. A wooden flute haunting "Cosmic Tear", beautiful as nothing else. Disturbing synths reminiscent of early id Software/Raven FPS. No track sounds the same. Too many elements to mention, quite often too many to handle in one listening session; rarely have I begun listening to the opening tubular bells and actually reached the sampled screams of Laura Palmer in the harrowing sadness and mystery of the aptly titled "Dementia" within an hour.

On one side, a misanthropic hatred and aloof contempt for a mankind killing itself and its world - "Clarity Thru Apathy", "Complex 25", "Justified End", "Submerged", "Misanthropic Disgust". On the other, a saddened melancholy mourning what the other side loathes - "Cosmic Tear", "Procreation Abnegation", "March Of Chemical Pessimism", "Dementia". A tornado of scintillating effects and multifaceted emotions. The results of one deranged and overly ambitious bastard, clearly extremely talented and seriously creative, with an army of guest musicians - seven heads for seven instruments* - and way too much time in the studio - three years in the making. A masterpiece to some, scrambled ape-shit to others. Take your stance - I sure haven't taken mine. Into strange metal? Then this is for you.

(*Schematics on guest musicians: two vocalists, three drummers, two guitarists, two bassists, one keyboardist, one flautist, counting members from twelve bands. And again, seven musicians. Plus Mike Hrubovcak who is responsible for everything, from composition and arrangement to layout and theme to electronics, instruments and vocals.)

aVoid

BRISTOL MEYERS SQUIBB

Easy Listening Aggravation

Release: 1998-2002

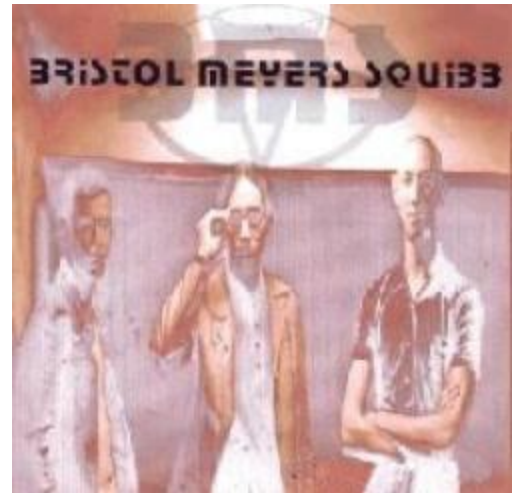
Label: [Self Released](#)

Avantgenre: Experimental Techno Metal

Duration: 32:14

Origin: France

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/borisdoussy>



.....
This is some rocking stuff!! Fast techno beats, aggro-metal, and a distinct mood that is as influenced by Orbital as it is by Screw. This avoids most clichés native to the industrial metal genre, by incorporating elements of world beat as well as jungle to alternately ambient and violent mix of Sonics. I am not kidding when I say this is some of the most original and invigorating stuff have heard under the avant garde metal banner.

There is also a pseudo-black metal feel to the more frantic sections, but again without the clichéd riffing, chord sequences or patented grim mood. A single song features up to six to seven different vocal style, and twice as many sample sources, besides the backbone of thrash riffing and techno drum n bass. I love the carefree attitude the band projects in their compositions, unrestricted by imagery or concerns of uniformity. This is all over the map. You could be sweating in a club to

this, and the next moment stabbing someone to the same rhythm (without once coming close to eyeliner or latex-wear even once in the proceedings). I was going to use different songs as examples to dissect, but as the album progressed I gave up on this endeavour as a lost cause. Sometimes you just have to listen and learn. The only reason I can think its obscurity is the lack of distribution by the concerned parties and the sheer honesty of the music. As well as sudden bursts of hyper techno speed. Think hardcore techno as envisioned by a Ministry/Aborym cover band, with a schizophrenic sampler. Lovely!

Anyone remotely claiming to be into any kind of AGM needs this NOW! Really, I haven't used these many exclamations in a review ever. My only gripe would be the 128 kbs sampling rate of the mp3 which simply does not do justice to the dense Sonics.

Suleiman

CARRIER FLUX

In Waste

Release: 2002

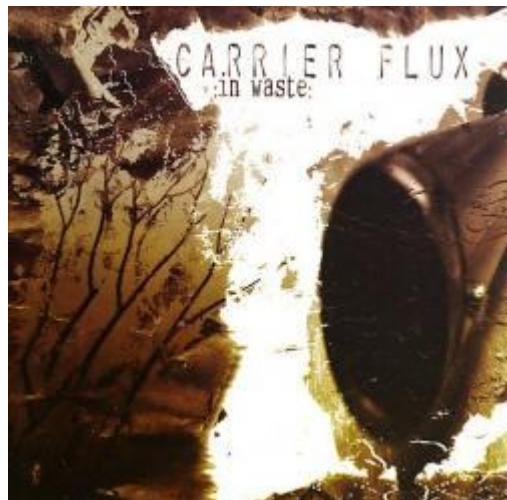
Label: [Black Lotus](#)

Avantgenre: Melodic Dark Cyber Metal Madness

Duration: 41:54

Origin: USA

Official site: <http://www.carrierflux.com/>



Absolutely awesome!!! This is some of the best new extreme melodic metal I have heard so far. What raises the bar here is that along with the more melodic death / black metal there is distinct industrial and gothic influence throughout the record. The opener "Rebirth" sums up nicely the more immediate (and traditional) aspects of the band and is strangely catchy amidst all its twists. "Ghost in the Machine" continues this trend of moving forward with all guns blazing. Soundwise it is close to a mix of Red Harvest (for need of a better comparison) and melodic death/black (in a few places, quite brutal) metal with a sprinkling of mid-era Tiamat. I know it looks strange in writing, but wait 'till you hear this. When the blasts, layers, melodic guitars and samples come together with the varied vocal attack you will know too. The bizarre interlude "Transition" shows that the band also has complete mastery of other-worldly ambience. The synth-based atmospherics continue in "Lustmord" which morphs into goth-folk (ala Death in June / Bauhaus) which has a real dark/sad feeling, and it intensifies as the song builds and builds, leading to hyper blast and back.

To be honest, this caught me unaware, as I was expecting industrial black metal, not a complete tour of everything great about extreme cyber metal. "Martyrs" has more of a Myrksog vibe, but mixes it up with some awesome doom. This distincts the trademark style of Carrier Flux (I cannot

believe I have mentioned a trademark style when listening to an album for the first time, but damn if this isn't original and good). The clean vocals are some of the better ones heard in such an extreme band (and believe me this is extreme - it's harsh and brutal as it is atmospheric and mature).

I was listening to this at work with headphones and could barely keep myself from head banging along to this madness. A barely contained grin danced on my face as the colossal instrumental "Serpent" rolled over me. And the follow-up punch of the muscular and angry "Above the Crippled Earth" had my jaw on the floor. This song needs immediate hearing. Some of the most vicious riffing here ("The Enemy within") is coupled with a vocoder. The synths on this song are nuts! By the last song they had firmly bored a second asshole on extreme metal's bloated corpse (hear the harmonized melodic vocals over the dissonant riffing and the hyperblasts, with the great breaks, growls, shrieks, electronica et al). As the beautiful folky outro fades out, you just have to press play again.

And you know what, the damn thing is available as a free download (high-quality mp3) at:

[www.carrierflux.com/Carrier_Flux-In_Waste\[2002\].zip](http://www.carrierflux.com/Carrier_Flux-In_Waste[2002].zip)

Suleiman

CHORONZON

Psychosis Ex Machina

Release: 2004

Label: [Foamin' Sodomy Records](#)

Avantgenre: Noise Orchestration Of Chaos Thrash

Duration: 60:10

Origin: USoA

Official site: <http://choronzon333.livejournal.com/>



In 1998, Samoth's Nocturnal Art Records released something of a milestone record that went by without being noticed at all in the underground circles. Choronzon's *Magog Agog*, a mostly industrial-fed post-black-thrash-heavy psychedelic and nightmarish beast, however, probably surprised the few groups of people that actually had the chance to hear its bizarre malice, to the point where they did like me and followed with great care each of its subsequent musical steps. Well, six years later, P. Emerson Williams launched what I would call one of the most psycho-advanced and noise-demented metal album of the 21st century. I really had to write about this album in relation to our great electro metal celebration, because if you ask me, this is the real thing!

First of all, Choronzon isn't simply adding a couple of electronica elements now and then on top of a galloping rock metal band, nor does he recharge in expensive studios his compositions with a typically over-produced industrial, polished and clinical sound, as most actual so-called electro metal bands are doing. On *Psychosis Ex Machina*, Mr. Williams has found an *ensemble sonore* which doesn't allow you anymore to distinguish the noisy, EVP-fuelled and feedback noise overall dirt from the sometimes out-there majestic, sometimes spooky black angular guitar riffs. Despite all these abstract definitions that I'm making up here, Choronzon kicks major ass and is always on the edge of catchiness, but in an extraterrestrial fashion I should add.

That's why I love how Mr. Williams hasn't sacrificed any of the aural rawness aesthet-

ics which are usually linked with old-school metal. His music, as psychedelic and coloured as it is, has real bite, which means that it's got an authentic aggressive attitude and a futuro-retro punk-head archaism. I would say that it is right out of these subtle tensions that his musical boldness is expressing itself with a rarely witnessed power. It can bring out the caveman inside you as much as it can open up your mind to unknown forms of music. One has to mention the multi-layered shamanic vocal techniques that at every turn can easily overwhelm your attention spots. The man is screaming, whispering, singing, crooning, deep-throating, gagging, scratching, breathing, feedbacking, morphing, reciting - often all at the same time! Pretty engulfing, to say the least.

Among the album, there are three shorter segments of pure dark ambient music, where it is made clear that this man has been working hard with his alien machines before getting to a musical language as fluent as this one is. I won't settle down for a track-by-track description, since *Psychosis Ex Machina* is Mr. Williams clearly most diverse and genre-bending effort to me. For example, listening to *The Enchanting Dead*, with its ear-candy mystical far west cowboy metal groove, is quite a surreal experience I must confess, and it always makes me feel like I'm surrounded by miles and miles of desertic sand dunes, smoking mirages and dead-hot snakes. *Asymmetrical Red Chamber*, however, sounds like it has been generated by a furious, out of control machine factory whose irresistible penchant for dirge rythms and horror metallic

sensory assaults will knock you down. And yet, when you get to *Ornamental Crypto-Anarchy*, the fifteen minutes vastly epic finale, you are first welcomed, at least for a few minutes, with some of the most felt-through melodic black metal guitar lines you'll ever have the pleasure to hear, only to lay down in the middle part of the song and let yourself be submerged by a much-needed evanescent lull, out of which, one by one, millions of massive ambient drone waves slowly build up to a godspeed climax of sheer, enthralling and grandiloquent post-metal beauty.

So if you haven't already, go and get your-

self a copy of this high-quality album, turn up the volume and test the limits of metal. I mean, I've been for quite a long time a fan of electronic music of all kinds, but I've never ever heard something like that. Also, both the beautiful and very artistic cover and inside layout have been completely painted and organised by P. Emerson Williams himself, only raising *Psychosis Ex Machina* to a well-deserved classic status. Will you ever dare enter his world? It's all up to you by now.

Oliver Side

CHORONZON

Panic Pandemic

Release: 2005

Label: [Foamin' Bone Productions](#)

Avantgenre: Freeform Noise Metal

Duration: 02:16:38

Origin: USoA

Official site: <http://choronzon333.livejournal.com>



Welcome to this *Noise And Metal United in Mutual Deconstruction* today lesson. Please have a seat - there you go, good boys and girls. In case you should feel a panic attack, there are only two emergency exit doors: one down your ass, the other one through an explosion of your brain cells. So one could easily argue that Choronzon's third full-length, *Psychosis Ex Machina*, with all its avant-genre procreations and intriguing manners of being, fully contained, by and in itself, many so-called experimental bands complete discographies. And as if this wasn't enough, P. Emerson Williams came back two years later to release his most punishing and disturbing record to date. As a matter of fact, *Panic Pandemic* is so much violating your senses and turning so hard your musical consciousness into a tiny drop of fear, that I should prevent most people from a) absorbing hallucinogenic substances while this album is in the stereo

and b) listening to this music at all! But at the same time, this album is so much waving out and just like floating as pure acoustic equations that I should invite everyone to a) take hallucinogenic substances while this is playing in the stereo and b) listen very carefully to its subtle, epiphenomenal harmonies.

Am I exaggerating? Am I only taking the piss at you? Well I'm not so sure myself what the answer might be. The first few times I gave this record a spin, I *seriously* thought that P. Emerson Williams had lost his mind, and that after having spent his golden years deconstructing every metal genre known to mankind, he was now venturing into pure metal abstractions that didn't retain any substantial link with common sense and reality. In that sense, I somehow conceived this new album as an ultimate way for him to wave a final goodbye to his worldwide fanbase. But let's

stick to the music and not to my fragile imagination. This is in-your-face, explicitly damaged, disturbed, maniacal, frightening, psycho-schizo twisted and viciously tortured music, over-expanding itself to a point where it can get barely bearable. Often I would take my headphones off and say to myself: this is *too much*! Forget about your usual satanic, bloody misanthropia-induced black industrial metal band, because *Choronzon makes Aborym look cheesier than Hammerfall doing a ballad with Elton John*, to quote Metal Coven. Be prepared - you have been advised.

Actually, don't let yourself be fooled by the first track on here, *Ontological Anarchism*, which is kind of a laid-back, weirdly mixed entrancing post-metal and pre-jazz tribal introduction. One should consider it, most probably, as a sleeping lull before the upcoming natural disasters. Yes, this album sounds like the purest chaos of all times. Even more so when Mr. Williams, for example on *Human Rites Schizoanalysis*, decides to carpet bomb his listeners with faster-than-light drum programming methods, which include multi snares, multi bass drums and multi toms all blast-beating together but on different time-signatures, of course supporting some sort of hard to decipher, immense, monstrous tornado-riff machineries that no one happens to know how to turn off. And please never forget that when I use the word "riff" within a choronzonic context, I'm always referring myself to thousands and thousands of crypto-voices, all kinds of peripheral shimmering noises, industrial landscapes, mesmerising wave frequencies and ritualistic formulas recited over and over again in otherworldly raspy trance states. While on *The Process Of Conditioning*, there even are traces of a voivodian punk approach underneath it all, which was by the way so cool to hear, the song just before it is all about a deconstructed post-rock monster groove. You never know what's going to be in the next corner with Mr. Williams.

Using less and less colours and blurring everything unto an oppressive, dark menacing ambience, I would go as far as to say that with *Panic Pandemic*, Choronzon has expanded the notion of what metal

riffing is supposed to be, and actually did bring it up to an atmo-sphere of abstraction where melodies and rythms are either practically non-existent or have been inherently *noisified* to a grandeur unknown. Even compared to his own previous material, this album is more aggressive and along the lines of a retro punk black speedy jazz-thrash on the edges of contemporary noise music. In other words, once you discover every single instrumental details that were subsumed by the overall production, it is highly tempting to compare his compositions to a thick fog or to a group of heavy clouds. Whereas Choronzon is using, as I said, so many elemental fragments of sounds as a starting point, he's transforming these into one pulsing, undetermined plasma of energy. Now isn't that what the science of magic is all about?

The second part to *Panic Pandemic* is a well-done and multi-layered hour long ambient, noise track, slowly emerging from a relatively calm drone to an ever-growing intensity, as once again, tribal percussions take the lead and sound martial as the Apocalypse itself. You ought to hear this one in order to realise how artistically talented and varied is Choronzon, even more so now that ambient experimentation and electronic music in general have become the trend of the day in the metal circles; well, here comes a man who's more than obviously been doing it for a very long time. As a bonus to the first 333 buyers, Mr. Williams offered a 100 or more pages book version of the album, thus delighting us all with many exemples of his magnificent paintings and poetry, which are all linked in some way or another to the music recorded on *Panic Pandemic*. Get in touch with the man and perhaps there are still some of these gems left in his well-hidden cryptic caves. Here comes a one of a kind album, that's for sure. One can only hope that Choronzon will soon enough come back even stronger because I truly believe that the scene is more ready today for a comeback than it's ever been. Or is Choronzon forever condemned to stay out of the scenographic script? Once again, it's all up to you by now.

Oliver Side

CHROME HOOF

Crush Depth

Release: 2010

Label: [Southern Records](#)

Avantgenre: Astrodelick Funk Metal

Duration: 59:08

Origin: USoA

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/chromehoof>



.....
For this never seen before review, I was joined by the grand, grand, little grandchild of the late Aleister Crowley, an underground magus and post-mentalist who goes by the name of Sir Julius Henry Crowley. He told me he had been given at birth the power to, quote, "see through Musick" - whatever this means. To tell you the truth, I've known Chrome Hoof since the Pre-Emptive period, but was never fully able to find the right words to describe this Out-cast Outfit. They're playing by standards they have invented out of the blue. So when Sir Julius Henry Crowley offered me such an unprecedented opportunity to get my AGM reviewer's work done with the help of Crowleyan magick, don't ask me why, I said yes right away. I couldn't resist, so to speak. Therefore while the album was playing, Sir Julius Henry Crowley visited some other plane or some outer channel of perception of consciousness, and he came back with these written words, which he claims to have heard from worlds beyond. I haven't changed anything to the originals - the way I got it is the way you will read it. So like it or not, that's up to you, but the value of this review lies elsewhere. Thanks for reading.

Leo Smee (from Cathedral and Miasma & the Carousel of Headless Horses) formed Chrome Hoof with his drummer bro Leo Smee - and the duo expanded to more or less a dozen performers.

The musick proceeds from bass, guitar, synthesizer, percussion, bassoon, saxophone, cello, drum, piano, rhodes, organ, trumpet, violin, viola and much female vocals and sprightliness.

Chrome Hoof takes the Post-rock, Elektro distorted-RIO phat b-ass complex riffing and organically heart-crosses it with dark alien-sympho space Metal.

Crush Depth is perhaps, we say, less Disco-oriented and more psi-Operatic in length than *Pre-Emptive False Rapture*, its wondrous predecessor.

What does that mean? Well, it's catchier, dancier, with more layers of biospheric lasers inside the molecular sounds - and more uproarious dreams to revel in.

More like a stupendous, monsterlike structure - we would say - and yet, so delicately assembled - kick ass and sensual.

The Funk Groove has subjectively and objectively not been left anywhere behind.

En effet, Funk Groove is what contradistinguishes this Rock/Metal Orchestra from most other Rock/Metal bands alive and dead.

They're Funk-y-Cool-y à la *Discothèque* - though altered into an Occult Thrash dancing slushpit.

Now and then, seventies Psyche-Prog and Kosmisch escapades are also introduced among the album's Astrodelick concoctions.

Of great importance, this experiMetal Ensemble stands not so far away from the teachings of Sun Ra's intergalactic traveling through sound.

We're reminded of Luke Vibert's **MOVE YOUR MIND MOVE YOUR FEET** pro-Beat campaign.

By all means, it's broader in scope than Voodoo Rock/Metal and looking further over Elecktro Space Funk - visibly concealed altogether.

Our last words shall be:

Vote against Chrome Division.

Vote for Chrome Hoof!



« Sous mon aisselle droite il y a un caméléon! »

Oliver Side

DIABOLOS RISING

666

Release: 1994

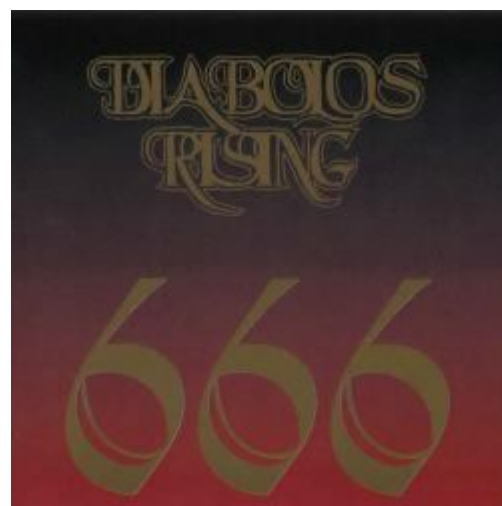
Label: [Osmose Productions](#)

Avantgenre: Ritualistic Industrially-Satanized Metal

Duration: 34:42

Origin: Greece / Finland

Official site: <http://none>



Released back when Osmose Productions was a purveyor of eclectic and well respected quality underground music, including such bands as Pan-Thy-Monium, Rotting Christ, Masters Hammer, Dark Tranquillity and many more, this release is no exception. It is a cooperation between artists of differing locals but of a similar

musical and undoubtedly theological mind set. This CD possesses a clinically dark quality having the straight forward simplicity and production of an industrial album with the aesthetics of, what was at the time, the Satanic black metal underground.

The musical backbone that makes up Diabolos Rising comes from the mind of Magus Wampyr Daoloth of Necromantia (and other Greek bands, too numerous to mention here). By taking the framework of drum and guitar composition from the likes of Ministry and KMFDM, and then mixing it with keyboards reminiscent of some 80's horror movie, he managed to create an album that coalesces the personae of Black Metal with the precision of Industrial quite well. The production is clean and polished with atmosphere provided by the ever-present sound of droning keyboards which gives it an almost palpable evil ambiance. There is a somewhat subtle Mediterranean, or even middle eastern, flavor through many songs and when juxtaposed with the technological aspects make it easily adaptable for use as either a soundtrack to "Bladerunner" or "The Last Temptation of Christ".

The vocal delivery is provided by the second half of this electronic project, Finland's Impaled Nazarene spokesman, Mika Luttinen. Taking into consideration the practice he had on the industrialized track "Gott ist Tot" off of Impaled Nazarene's

release "Ugra Karma" it seems only appropriate to have Mika as the voice of this incarnation. As one might expect the majority of vocals have that Imp. Naz. tone and forcefulness, with many of them having added effects heightening the industrial feel. Added to that are a handful of spoken parts which help accentuate the ritualistic elements of the music.

As for the lyrical content (also written by Daoloth), with a title like "666" one can make obvious assumptions. Of course not without it's sense of Satanic irony, track 6 being literally 6min and 6sec of silence for Satan.

Along with a few disparate projects, such as the Cold Meat Industry releases, this is one of the earliest examples of individuals from the Black metal underground delving into electronically based music, pre-dating the exploration of many of their contemporaries by a number of years. Which makes this a must for anyone interested in such Black metal/Industrial amalgamations and deviations.

MvH

DIAPSIQUIR

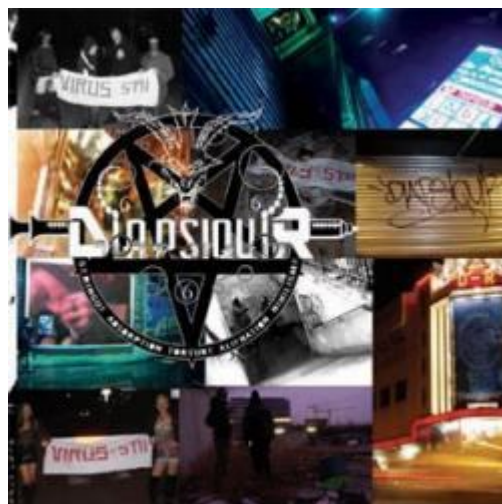
Virus S.T.N.

Release: 2005

Label: [Necrocosm](#)

Avantgenre: French Crackwhore Electro Black Metal

Origin: France



Have you ever wondered how 666 International would sound, played through a French crackpot freaking out on acid? Well, the closest I have ever heard would be Diapsiquir, the perverted brainchild of Arkhon Infaustus guitarist Toxik Harmst (voice/guitar/bass/computers). This is probably one of the most wicked, malignant and satanic recordings I have ever come across, seeping in the depravity and

anguish of urban decay. At the core of it all, you find black metal, throbbing with the powers of SATAN (according to Diapsiquir, short for Seringe - Absorption - Torture - Alienation - Nihilisme). Yet it is not Satan in the biblical sense, but the Devil in its truest form - in the empty eyes of the homeless prostitute and the abused child, or flowing through the veins and

reeking in the vomit of the heroinist. Diapsiquir thrives on human filth.

Musically, Virus STN is extremely diverse. Very well executed progressive BM at the core, riddled in samples and programming. The vocals - all in French - are easily decipherable (if you know the language) yelling and screaming. No traditional growling, but rather a pissed-off shouting, giving the music an air of depraved humanity, unparalleled to my experience. The samples are made up of philosophical monologues (also in French - "Dieu? C'est moi!"), classical music (Russian opera and Beethovens 7th symphony), children screaming (highly unsettling!), gunshots et c. Even the music sounds very French,

from the clear piano melodies and the accordion (!!!) down to the excellent riffing, and the percussion moves from ordinary blastbeats to programmed triphop and drum&bass beats. All very strange, in a positively negative way, owing a lot to DHG, yet taking the electro-BM legacy much further. Unfortunately, Diapsiquir was discontinued after Virus STN (their second full-length), but the dark madness is still closer than you think. This is maybe not for everyone, since it does require a certain mind set. But I am addicted to this timeless venom.

aVoid

DøDHEIMSGARD

666 International

Release: 1999

Label: [Moonfog Productions](#)

Avantgenre: Kosmische Techno Black

Duration: 66:06

Origin: Norway

Official

site: <http://www.myspace.com/dodheimsgard>



.....
With 666 International, we see Dødheimsgard creating, of course out of the famous black metal hole where they came from, a whole new way of playing with sounds. Already on their previous EP Satanic Art, we could hear more and more traces of the upcoming chaos, but nothing was so certain yet. Whatever happened to guitarist and prime composer Vicotnik, singer and lyricist Aldrahn and their now partners-in-crime between 1997 and 1999, there's an obvious dive into psychedelic adventures within the music they then put into form, just as there are clear evidences of schizophrenia in the way many absurd musical details happen to create, once placed together, kind of an

attractively strange meaning. The music here is as groovier as it is disordered.

Out of all the nine songs, there is for instance "Shiva-Interfere", an almost ten minute's sick industrial floating opera, where Aldrahn sings some unpleasant tales of mythology and outer space, with a uniquely bizarre and angular beauty in his tragic-comic vocal tones. As he's just about to cry, being all sweetly delicate and nostalgic, he then explodes into a perverse, sadistic and out-there laughter. I would even go as far as to say that there's a certain "alien" quality to his voice – it is simply out of this world. All of his vocals, in this song, are performed over a mysterious desert-riffing style which follows

some sort of a deep, pulsing electronic drum groove. Quite special, to say the least! Well the majority of 666 International is performed on the thin borders normally placed between sanity and common sense, in such a way that at first, you always feel a sort of uncertainty, an odd unpleasantness, a real feeling of discord and paranoid terror. You're not really sure if what you hear is supposed to be kick-ass black metal or a horrible mind-fuck. Then again, that's what avant-garde music is all about: to first question what has always been conceived as normal and natural, and then create a whole new universe.

Be very attentive when it comes to all the textures and the wrappings of the musical content displayed here, because that is where Dødheimsgard do shine through the most on this album. Ginge from Norwegian electronic band Subgud had his hands on the final product and its easy to hear why, as there's a serious attention to a certain atmosphere of sounds, clearly reminiscent of techno music. I'm not saying that form wins over content; quite the

contrary actually, because if it weren't for Vicotnik's singular guitar twists and how he builds these up and down in the most unusual way, along crushing groovy techno drums and all kinds of synthesizers and grand piano, I couldn't be writing these words.

Every black metal possible experimentation has been given a try on 666 International, for the better or for the worst, all depending on how far you can actually take it, and it's as much death, thrash, black and rock metal music here as it is noise and ambient related there – usually at the same time! From pure mayhem blast beat chaos to slick, techno avant-garde rock, Vicotnik and his super-hero mates cover it all up around here. Come and discover how sick and perverted excessively aggressive attitudes in music can become in the right (or wrong) hands. Only for those who can find real pleasure deep in pure psychosomatic madness and drug-infused cosmic fantasies.

Oliver Side

DOL AMMAD

Ocean Dynamics

Release: 30th of August 2006

Label: [Electronicartmetal Records](http://www.electronicartmetalrecords.com/)

Avantgenre: Electronic Art Metal Aquatic Space Opera

Duration: 59:17

Origin: Greece

Official site: <http://www.dolammad.com/>



When I looked at the album cover I first felt like a beaten dog, which then was slowly and carefully nosing the CD until realising it was a friend and not a foe. "Ocean Dynamics" is a continuous concept starting in outer space, represented by the powerful first four tracks of "Tha-

lassa Dominion I-IV". The journey moves on into the solar system and "Solarwinds" is tied on with fast and fantastic drums which really sound like solar winds. This is musically so amazingly well done, that you could distinguish between a storm and a wind. The wind here even carries

the cries of dolphins into the atmosphere very softly. Further, continuing from "Descend", descending to earth into "Lava" where the fire from the sun liquefies slowly, to then finally ending in the ocean (last three tracks). Here you can listen to more water sounds when you were missing them in the first parts.

One has to listen to the entire album to develop an understanding of the whole idea musically as well as lyrically, because after several minutes of each song completely new parts appear in a sudden and make the album very fluctuating; with plenty of tempi and arrangements, sounds and partly different styles of music, from Funk-Jazz to extreme Black Metal- like drums and percussions, mostly somewhere in between all these genres in the up-and-mid-tempi.

What makes this band unique is the combination of Metal and 70's electronic music with distinctive synthesizer sounds similar to Jean Michel Jarre and Vangelis. It seems like the marriage of Berlin Love Parade with some Rock Festival. The Metal music to some extent reminds me of

Luca Turilli and Rhapsody, certainly because of Alex Holzwarth (Drummer of Rhapsody of fire), who seemed to find asylum in this project with his characteristic way of drumming.

The second cherry on the top constitutes the choir of 14 people (seven women and seven men). They represent the operatic bombast throughout the album and also "flow" with DC Cooper (Ex-Royal Hunt) in "Aquatic Majesty". Therefore, "Ocean Dynamics" is the perfect symbiosis of electronic music, operatic music and Metal. It can be seen as a complete art work with its wonderful orchestration, lyrics and also with its amazing cover art work that was designed totally coherent. You have to decide whether this is your cup of ocean dynamics or not. I find it to be a fantastical album, where ocean meets universe with a lot of atmosphere in between. All my thumbs, including big toes up!

Katja Honeywine

DOL AMMAD

Star Tales

Release: November 2004

Label: [Electronic Art Metal](#)

Avantgenre: The Hyperspatial Electronic Metal Opera

Duration: 01:01:59

Origin: Greece

Official site: <http://www.dolammad.com>



Star Tales... and now I have no idea what to say. On one hand I would love to give you a full oversight of what this album is potentially going to do to you once you hit the play button but on the other hand, the possible range of psychedelic journeys it will take you on by listening to this might get restrained if I tell you about the places that this album took me to.

The first track "Dreamport" is the station where you embark for the journey and where a commanding yet gentle voice tells

you to synchronize your dreams which should be taken seriously so that the music can develop a maximum of efficiency.

Star Tales is my personal soundtrack to the places I always wanted to go to and imaginary alien civilizations I wanted to visit. Of course that is because my fascination and interest in the origins and depths of space knows no boundaries and everything about this album blends in perfectly with what I believe there is be-

yond the frontiers of our solar system and the Milky Way.

How does Thanasis Lightbridge, the mastermind of Dol Ammad, achieve this though? Thanasis is a fan of music in the vein of Vangelis. To refresh your memory: Vangelis wrote the soundtrack to 1492 with Gérard Depardieu, a movie about Christopher Columbus' journey to the new world and its discovery. Whoever remembers the main theme song, the choir and epic scale of it will find it easier to get an idea of what Dol Ammad is about although the choir is pretty much the only common ground shared by these two.

Thanasis doesn't use too many classical music elements to create his trademark spacial atmosphere. Actually almost none let apart the choir and the horns. Try to picture it like this (metaphorically). The members of the choir are standing as the brightest stars in the night sky and fill the instrumental explosion (big bang...) with life and soul and brings vitality into the supposedly empty infinity of the universe. That is to give you a picture of the musical consistency we are dealing here with. Amazingly dense keyboards get their punch through distorted guitars, the choir is lifted to a divine level by doubling their lines with horns and synthesizer frenzy. Whoever expects an orgy in terms of epic music is guaranteed to get it. However, Thanasis doesn't always go full scale. Rhapsody's Alex Holzwarth isn't always there to double bass drum the songs to new highs of grandeur. Thanasis understands when it is time for a little break to primarily let the listener recover but secondly

and most importantly to get more diversity into the course of the album.

The probably biggest strength of this album is its sheer amazing amount of quality composition and how long it takes to really learn this album by heart. I listened to it so many times now and trust me: it takes forever to really grasp this album. Not really because of its compository complexity but when you listen to the album you are so absorbed by the atmosphere it creates that in first instance you will listen to this over and over again because it's like a free ticket to your own interstellar paradise, and for me personally, it is a place I really like to be at as much as possible. And then, someday maybe, you will want to work your way through this cosmic storm of musical elements you didn't really care about before because all that mattered was the effect. The keyboards, the drums, the guitar, how the choir and the synths throw the main parts back and forth to each other and how it all explodes in a big acoustic orgasm that gives its listener an amount of enjoyment that hardly fits into the unpresent frontiers of our universe...

Star Tales comes in a beautiful digipack that perfectly underlines how colorful and diverse and way ahead of our time this music is. I recommend that you go to www.electronicartmetal.com right now and order your copy right away... and also get [Ocean Dynamics](#) while you are at it! That should give you enough Electronic Metal to chew on for a couple of months. Space on!

David

DOL THEETA

Goddess

Release: 2008, August
Label: [Electronic Art Metal Records](#)
Avantgenre: Electronic Art Metal
Duration: 17:17
Origin: Greece
Official site: <http://www.thanasislightbridge.com>



More than a year ago DOL AMMAD mastermind Thanasis Lightbridge proclaimed the coming of a new galaxy in the universe of electronic art metal. And now finally the long wait is over! The mysterious "Goddess" DOL THEETA strides down from the heavens in majestic beauty and spreads her bewitching, narcotic whispers.

Thanasis is a masterful composer who manages in perfection to combine the mightiness of metal with the crystalline soundscapes of electronic music. DOL AMMAD shows the bombastic, epic sides of this unique mixture, the extroverted and aloft spheres, the onwards riding spaceships and shining light-cities in the skies. DOL THEETA instead is the mysterious, phantasmagoric sister of Dol Ammad. It's a mesmerizing maelstrom that draws you down to the grounds, a smile full of riddles and questions. It's a door to meditative, intimate and peaceful dreams that can easily turn into unfathomable labyrinths.

The first thing you see when holding the MCD in your hands is the marvellous design. The releases of Thanasis always stand out with splendid surreal-futuristic artwork. And the digi-pack of "Goddess" even brings this one step further. The first song "Goddess" opens with spherical dripping synthie-lines and sparkling arpeggios, the dreamlike, yearning, monalisaic angelvoice of Kortessa and the furious guitar soli of Dim (both also play

in DOL AMMAD), all grounded by heavy drums and guitars. The vocal lines are extremely catchy and bewitching, at the same time strange and worldless. To even dive deeper into the atmosphere of this song the psychedelic video-clip of "Goddess" is included to the MCD.

The second song "Dream of Doors" is an electronic deconstruction of "Goddess", stripping it from any metal elements and making a great ambient song out of it. Finally the futuristic marching epos "Deathstars" draws a stronger bridge to the bombastic worlds of Dol Ammad. Behind the catchiness of this song hides a great complexity. The arrangement is full of subtle details, concerning melodies as well as sounds. And this song has an incredibly liquid structure, where one part flows into the other so organically hardly heard anywhere else before. It's not just a song, it's a living being!

This masterpiece raises high expectations for the forthcoming first full-length album of DOL THEETA.

Check

www.thanasislightbridge.com

to listen to the whole, full, complete MCD without any limits! And make shure to support this great band and buy this CD! It's a masterpiece that will bewitch you for hours, days and years!

Chrystof

DOL THEETA

The Universe Expands

Release: 2008, December

Label: [Electronic Art Metal Records](http://www.electronicartmetalrecords.com)

Avantgenre: Electronic Metal Psychedelia

Duration: 57:50

Origin: Greece

Official

site: <http://www.thanasislightbridge.com/index.php>



Some months ago the newborn realms of DOL THEETA spelled its first bewitching

chants: [The marvellous debut MCD "Goddess" \(read review here\)](#) granted a first

gaze into the new musical universe of DOL AMMAD mastermind Thanasis Lightbridge. While DOL AMMAD is explosions and exploration, lightspeed and sunstorms, DOL THEETA unfolds the mysterious, phantasmagoric dreamscapes of the "Electronic Art Metal" collective.

"Goddess" already promised a lot, but still left one question open: Which of all those multi-coloured facets of the MCD unveil the path of the first full-length album? Is it the catchiness of the titlesong refrain or the morphic complexity of "Deathstars"? How will all the Trance-Ethno-Electro-Pop-Metal-Psychedelic-Ambient elements unite in the first 58 minutes epos of DOL THEETA?

"...A Psychedelic Experience..." The voice that led through the enigmatic whispers of the intro speaks its last words. Ultra-fat electro-bass pumps out of my speakers. But instead of a Techno beat soft, crystal-line keyboards set in to unwind them peacefully. Finally drums and heavy guitars join in apace mid-tempo. Still the keyboards spread a narcotic, unreal atmosphere. This is the start into another world. The voyage begins. The opener "Silver Air" is the dream of doors, the entrance to the intraversal multitudes of DOL THEETA. The spherical angel voices of Kortessa rise - mysterious, spaced-off, sometimes soft and fragile, sometimes bombastic and overwhelming, always bewitching and enthralling.

The journey leads to very peaceful, tranquil shores like "Nighttime", furious rides through lunacy (end of "Mud"), smooth, chilly lounge-sounds ("Every Goodbye") and dramatic bombast like the culmination of "Afterlife Crescendo". On the pop-

metal hymn "Something called Tomorrow" Thanasis himself contributes the male vocals, which gives a very harmonic duet together with Kortessa. His voice sounds a bit like the young Ozzy Osborne if he had ever cared a bit about his health. Definitely something that I'd be pleased to hear again on forthcoming releases.

While DOL AMMAD shows the metal side of "Electronic Art Metal", DOL THEETA strongly emphasizes its electronic sides. There are a lot of double bass drums and heavy, distorted guitar riffs. But they are mixed discreetly into the background. The sound is dominated by synthesizers, FX and the spherical vocals of Kortessa. So this is a completely new approach to Electro-Metal and creates an unreal, hypnotic atmosphere in which you easily can drown and lose yourself.

While DOL AMMAD captures the listener immediately with its epic hymns, DOL THEETA has to be explored. The deeper you dive, the more it reveals its rich treasures. It's an album that offers you new experiences each time you're listening. Even after the 65th listening you still can discover new facets and details, new meanings and atmospheres, new riddles and truths. It's not just an album - it's an adventure.

DOL THEETA is indeed a real Psychedelic Experience. It can bring you to any place in the universe. Don't miss this magnificent mindtrip!

Chrystof

G.U.T.

My Only Drug Is Madness

Release: 2007

Label: [Von Jackhelln Inhuman](#)

Avantgenre: Avant E-Hardcore Party

Duration: 35:42

Origin: Cosmopolite

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/gutmusic>



Lately, I've been known to look into the marriage of chemical drugs with musical avant-gardism. Although I will not paint myself in that corner for too long, I can only be interested by an artist whose only drug, at least according to his own words, is madness. This seems to be the strange case of Cornelius Von Jackhelln from Solefald and Sturmgeist fame, whenever he is turning upside down metal's basic rules in G.U.T., his less known solo project. On his first full-length record, the results are admittedly easy-going and far out, sensitive and barbaric, humoristic and dead serious, as the man fuses electronica beat, hip hop attitude, a strings quartet, hardcore catchiness and weird pop melodies with some unusual metal references, sometimes in the vocals, sometimes in the riffing itself, sometimes in the songs' "bite" and "kick", sometimes in a cover of Darkthrone. This is helped by a bombastic production, the quality of the sound making it easier to get into the songs' elements. So what we have here, in a way, is a non-metal album which is nonetheless resolutely metal. Sounds familiar enough? I don't think so. To my knowledge, no one does it exactly the way G.U.T. somehow managed to make this musical mess pleasing for the third ear. Too pop for the diehard weirdos, too edgy for the pop community - what in the hell is this?

As to proceed, let me start by noting that the album is as old as two years old and so varied that I will retrospectively go for a song-by-song crime investigation. A sort of "behind the scenes" inquiry. Grace under torture. File examined. Anomalies have been detected.

Balkanized in Belgrade – Electro hardcore anthem spitting at the face of imperialistic war through the anger of innocent people asking the "why did you bomb us" question to those who did it. The screaming vocals are flesh-ripping, the sounds bubbling and beaming, the guitars blazing with fury, this fucking kicks ass. A social catharsis to play loud.

Home of the Hardcore – Did you ever wonder if your living town either is no place for a party or the home of the hardcore? Come find out with this hilarious retro techno baby ballad classic. Yeah it smells alcohol abuse, has arty rock going on, as well as being an invitation to "bring the party to the people". Obviously, Cornelius has a good sense of humour and the talent to pull it through.

Transylvanian Hunger – G.U.T. reinvents and revalorizes an old Darkthrone top 5 hit from the good ol' nights of 1993, making it suitable for 2009's underground dancing clubs and other *soirées costumées d'opera* alike. Symphonic, elegant, orchestral, hips-waving electro pop with spicy hints of black metal spirits and mul-

ti toms rhythms. Had Fenriz, Nocturno Culto and Zephyrous gone Norwegian discotheques' icons, this would have been one of their earliest floor-ripper.

Représailles à Versailles – Solefaldesque neonism of hip hop with much vocal experi-
ment-
"mentation" from Cornelius, upon hearing whom I often found myself laughing out loud and feeling playful. Located in a backstreet area, phat bass and oozing dirty grooves meet with orchestral choruses and broken rapping. Simple and well-crafted. Why is there a reference to Versailles? I have no idea.

First Song Last Chance – Electro interlude, chanting females in awe, emphasis on light, beautiful, uplifting. A bit cheesy, not my favourite to be honest.

Mastur Bator – A mystical and satirical ode to the God of love, the great commander Mastur Bator. It is difficult to explain why but this song feels very realistic when you follow the lyrics. I think it is a very representative picture of the younger generations we are and will see coming more and more often. As Cornelius writes it in the lyrics, "look at the sea, at those waves of red heat; one million hearts pounding lust at every beat; we like it wicked, making love beyond measure; excess in every way, overdose on naughty pleasure". Obviously in good spirits and love worshipping, von Jackhelln once again surprises the listener with his sharp sense of humour and observation.

The Beauty & the Bitch – Every next door's guy who's had a few serious relationships with women will find in this song something from their past or present experience. Cornelius is a writer and even from the most personal point of views – in this case, a guy helplessly rambling over women – he makes it a universal theme using catchy pop as a springboard to enhance his ideas so to speak. The most accomplished pop song I've heard from G.U.T., and a very effective one at that.

The sudden guitars at two minutes into the song are priceless. Come on, sing with

me, "I've loved and been loved by the beauty and the bitch; I could never tell the woman from the witch".

Unconquered Sun – A more cinematic approach to music, this song is epic and contemplative right from the start. The drum programming is as usual basic though just enough alive to drive the song's dynamics into some interesting galloping. Think brooding, melancholic, sleazy, lurking electro rock accompanied by an Italian operatic drama edge and not devoid of something oddly "out there". Solefald fans should enjoy this one, or is it just me? Classic Cornelius vocals. Hardcore opera pop.

My Only Drug is Madness – Much darker and meaner, let me quote parts of this tam tam electro orchestra's lyrics to bring you into the mood:

"Music is the way I share what I have seen
My only drug is madness, my bloodstream is clean

Why do you need powder to behave like a star?
I say like Kurt Cobain, come as you are

We want to be loved, to be worshipped as gods
We sell our asses to be ridiculed as sods
An artist should live forgotten abroad
Away from TV and the celebrity fraud"

Nein Nein Zeppelin – Ending the album with industrial beats à la Future Sound of London, dry and aggressive guitar tones, German lyrics and truckloads of buzzing electronics is a cool and perfect way to say goodbye to such a circus-like record. An album for the freaks, an album for the blinds, an album for the wise. Old-school as much as it is new-school. One would assume that from his experience with this album, Cornelius will have new and perhaps weirder impulses for the upcoming Solefald.

Oliver Side

HAVOC UNIT

H.IV+ (Hoarse Industrial Viremia)

Release: 2008

Label: [Vendlus Records](#)

Avantgenre: Machine Butcher Metal

Duration: 53:37

Origin: Finland

Official site: <http://www.h-i-v.fi/>



...AND OCEANS are dead. Yet, its members continue under the name of HAVOC UNIT. And a change of name is appropriate, for what these creative people deliver on "h.IV+" has nothing to do with ...AND OCEANS at all. Who thought that HAVOC UNIT would continue the kind of disco-industrial metal they celebrated under the old name on "Cypher" is terribly wrong.

Gone are the pleasant, danceable melodies and beats. The first track "Vermicide" jumps right in your face with really ugly industrial metal - raw, menacing and evil. A cyber-demonized version of ME-SHUGGAH or a slower, but heavier version of THE AMENTA - that's what comes to my mind when listening to HAVOC UNIT these days, with a sound directly from the factories of 21st -century-hell. As the tracklist implies, HAVOC UNIT's lyrics deal with the perversions of the last decades to batter them relentless back in the face of mankind. And battering is the word that describes their music best - The screamed vocals, the machine-gun riffing and the stomping of the machine-beats hurt and is definitely not for the faint-hearted who seek beautiful melodies. For that matter, even people who seek ANY melody will be disappointed. "h.IV+" is one big rhythm-monster with samples, menacing synths and some slower intermezzi; it is a spirit of wrath; the embodiment of the pits of the human psyche.

And for that, I love it. It is cold, aggressive and inhuman; much like DHG's "Supervillain Outcast". There is only one downside: it is a little bit unvaried. If you'd play me a track, I could not say which one it is, only that it is on "h.IV+". And I wouldn't listen to it the whole day, for I am one of these people who like a good melody once in a while. But then there is "Ignoratio Elenchi [Reversed Genesis]" to make up for it, which is, simply put, brilliant. That is mostly due to the voice of SOLEFALD's Cornelius, but not only that, the track has a dreamy and dark atmosphere which gives you goosebumps. It might be a bit unfair to say that this (and only this) track sounds like a SOLEFALD-song (and not only due to Cornelius' voice), but that's the way it is... And there also is "Kristallnacht [From Revolution to Reconstruction]", a soothing piano piece.

All in all, I am positively surprised. No, not really surprised, because I didn't know what to expect from HAVOC UNIT now in the first place, only that the name change must have had SOME impact on the music. It is surely interesting to hear HAVOC UNIT explore regions of acoustic brutality other than speed, for brutal it is. A perfect soundtrack for the devil's abbatoir, a mix of rust and blood.

Tentakel P.

KRELL

Krell Demo

Release: 2006

Label: [Self Released](#)

Avantgenre: Goth Rock And ElectRoll

Duration: 37:56

Origin: Spain

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/krellianweb>



Starting with a clichéd yet still disturbing sample this quickly evolves into the very darkwave/goth influenced opening salvo of "Soul Eater" that quickly morphs into the band's unique goth rock. It has a groovy and strangely organic sound despite the abundance of samples, synths and the electro drumkit. Maybe it's the somewhat loose guitar (with a strange muffled tone, no less), or the early new wave goth vocals. There are even some classic sounding lead squeals towards the end of the song. This leads us to the gothic trance marriage on the rocks of "Too Real". These songs have warmth, and a real sleazy feel to them yet still maintaining the noir tones important to this type of sound.

The hooks are there, but the cult-ness of instrumentation and the elements of real rock n roll so prevalent in the music will keep this off the charts. I have to get a reference out there before I (god forbid) admit it's original so here it is, Lazy Music Reviewer ref # 535: a darkwave Rolling Stones covering 80's underground new wave. "III" almost got me dancing, seriously (while a tortured metal part of me wanted to turn this off and check out the latest grind download). But damn if the sloppy sounding traditional leads and the 80's synths aren't enjoyable. "Inoculation of Sound" has the heaviest guitar tone of the lot but once again in a Thrill Kill Cult covering Depeche Mode for the Doberman soundtrack context. Lovely and thoroughly gothic synths and samples all

the way though. Hell, this could have been on one of those Euro Vampire Rock compilations, except when the singer smiles and reveals the grade a grills instead of the pre-requisite fangs. "Out of Your Play" has a more heartfelt sound, mostly due to the Cure-ish guitar and synth work. Go ahead; cry while you dance in your black latex. "Say Hello Say Goodbye" is the darkest sounding of the lot, not unlike prime Christian Death doing electro-disco. Move, corpses, move! Some of the guitar manipulations are beautifully ugly and discordant, but never loose sight of the song. This damn CD might as well have been titled 'Gothic Electro Rock Hooks 101'. "Tale of a Common Day" has some authentic sounding bluesy opening licks, but quickly moves onto what Danzig's Blackacidevil should have sounded like, had he some compositional skills and artistic vitality left.

This begs the question why more of the darkwave/electro/EBM crowd cannot (or will not) allow more human elements into their sound. There is really is a lot of exploration left in the club oriented gothic scene, and as Krell amply demonstrates, some emotional rock 'n' roll will only enhance the beat. So please lay of the Horacio and Blutenegel CD's and give this a shot. Definitely a grower and keeper.

Suleiman

MANES

How The World Came To An End

Release: 2007

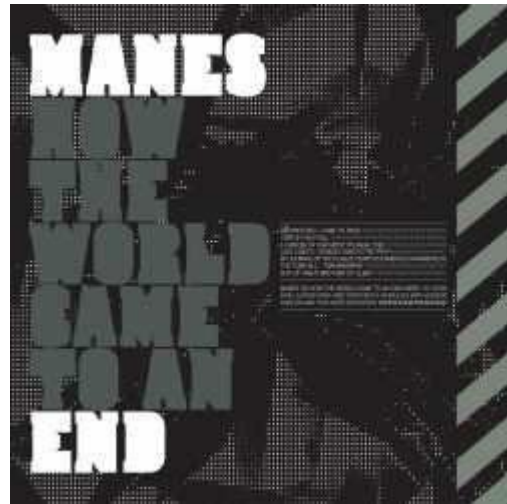
Label: [Candlelight Records](#)

Avantgenre: Dark Triphiphop

Duration: 44:37

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.manes.info>



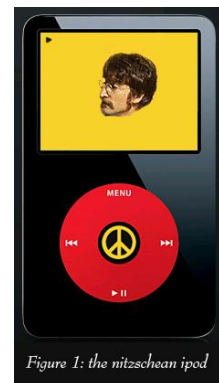
Nobody wants the truth. Imagine a dark cave where water runs down the walls and the neon light reflects some people doing weird things on weird electric machinery including a Commodore 64 (or 128) equipped with a Final Cartridge, digital Super 8 projectors and gadgetery like that. Imagine there's no people but Manes in their cave. Imagine there were no wars. Imagine John Lennon posing for Nike and doing photoshoots in the central park, posing with his exclusive John-Lennon-Ipod (see figure 1) and talking about yoda, yo-yos, generals, generals in wars and wars in general.

Imagine a world full of sounds that were produced by Manes exclusively. Nobody wants the truth. Imagine crossing the street, where the street lights inform the pedestrian with spanish children tunes and when a car breaks it sounds like a hammer that is dropped onto a pillow. Imagine a world full of images that were produced by Manes exclusively. Imagine crossing the street where there are no zebra crossings but real zebras fixed to the traffic light post, cars that don't look like cars but srac and drive backwards. Imagine there was no song called 'imagine'.

The beeps in #5 at ~3:00 are the greatest beeps I heard in a long time. One of the dreams of a reviewer is that one of his sentences is used by the record company in an ad for the album, similarly to those weird slogans at the end of movie previews, you know the "Remarkable. Boldly great. The New York Times." So I will try my best to find some slogans for this album that can be used by their label for advertising:

"This is the 'Srgt. Pepper' of the 21st century.", "Good. Better. Manes.", "This is sex for the ear.", "Iresistible. Without the spelling mistakes.", "Beyond beyondness.", "If we had 2005 one would think we had 2007.", "Imagine nobody wants the truth.

Jonny Lignano



MASTER'S HAMMER

Mantras - Venkovsky Operetta

Release: December 2009

Label: [Self-released Via Stormtype](#)

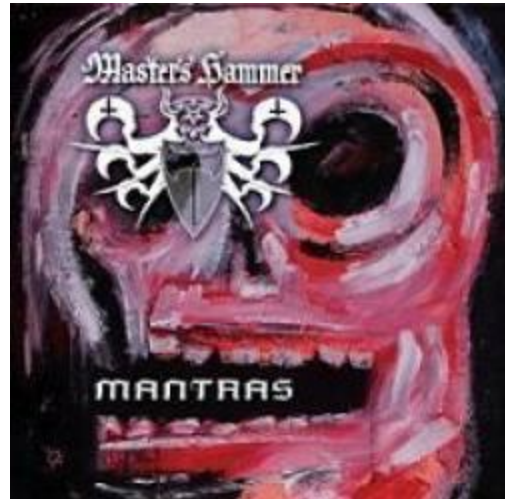
Avantgenre: Black Metal Enjoying Life, Exploring Sounds

Duration: 54:17 (cd)

Origin: Czech Republic

Official

site: <http://www.mastershammer.com>



MASTER'S HAMMER, the seminal proto-2nd wave Black Metal (=before Norwegian influence overrun the genre), is one of those bands that everybody's heard of, but not that many have listened to. Even fewer are those who seriously enjoy their works. And I mean *all* their works, not only the hefty, violent Black Metal of their demos and their first album, 1990's Ritual. MH are what you would call a cult band, which is why their sudden and unsuspecting reunion in October last year didn't send any shock waves throughout the Extreme Metal scene (compared to, for example, the Swiss drama queens with make-up who, like MH, really enjoyed their timpani), though it certainly raised a few enthusiastic eye-brows among the more heavily patched denim jackets across the globe.

What makes MASTER'S HAMMER so special, historically, was their complete irreverence to trends and Black Metal conformity. Already in 1989 they were using more or less symphonic keyboards and the trademark timpani (they even had a timpanist in the band, incorporating that percussive element to the music, live and in studio, not just for the exotic flavour). The seminal "The Jilemnice Occultist" album from 1992 is not as much an album, but as a thoroughly composed Black Metal operetta, with narrative, recurring themes. A masterpiece in its own terms. Eat your heart out, Dimmu Borgir. The subsequent 1995 album "Slagry" was as much a farewell to as a raised middle-finger against anything called metal; it sounds more like Nobuo Uematsu directing Laibach in a Bohemian beer hall. Or

something. Then nothing happened for 14 years, and save a cult following (wearing a lot of old-school patches, probably), MASTER'S HAMMER were forgotten - perhaps not forgiven their transgressions against the Holiest of Holy, Black Metal.

As is detailed in my [interview](#) with vocalist, guitarist and main composer Franta Storm, MH is a very laidback band. And you hear that. The thirteen tracks of Mantras were composed and recorded in about 6 months (except the classic "Jáma Pekel", which dates back to the late 80's, here enhanced by a choir of chirping frogs) - it's clear when you listen to the album that it's a spontaneous work; some parts sound a bit glued together, perhaps not every riff adds to the whole in a positive sense, some tracks are easily forgotten. But whatever that slight critique may weigh in an overall examination of the album, it doesn't matter, really. The vinyl version of the album has fewer tracks, and on the CD you can skip a track if you get bored. That's really not Franta&Co's problem, and you hear that. They make music for themselves (no labels, everything is self-produced, but honourably professional), they are not trying to make you listen. It's your choice. And I choose to. So what do I hear?

First of all, the production is heavy and clear. Monster's bass is very chunky, and the guitars lay like a snowy blanket over a field. To continue that simile, the electronic elements (symphonic and electro), the vocals and the timpani stand out as trees and bushes from the snow on that field. The drums are played on pads, making

the sound a bit more synthetic, but that's no biggie. Franta's sore screams have dropped in pitch and force (he's got to be in his forties by now), but are as rancorous as ever. The songs, all similar in shape and sound, independent and lined up (unlike Jilemnice Occultist's narrative shape or Slagry's unsettling dynamics), retain the core of the immediately distinguishable MASTER'S HAMMER sound. Most songs are based on clear, enchanting melodies and themes, played on guitars and organs (Hammond and church); I think of them as small roads winding through verdant central European valleys and hills - you can see where they are going, without many unforeseen surprises, but it is still a great pleasure to follow their twists and turns. Harsh and beautiful, but without the forcedly histrionic drama and shallow romanticism you normally find in symphonic metal. As MASTER'S HAMMER have always been.

For a Black Metal band (as they still claim they are), there is not much traditional Black Metallery here to be found; MH somehow manage to negate the past 18 years of Norwegian influence upon the genre. The riffs are heavy and bludgeoning, but relate more to ordinary rock music than Death Metal (but do for the Devil's sake not think of any recent BM/rock crossover). Mantras is not modern, nor is it old school. Again, I think of central European forests and fields - like them, MASTER'S HAMMER are timeless.

A couple of tracks stand out from the crowd, like big rocks raised centuries ago in a beech forest (can't seem to leave those

similes behind!). "Bodhi" and "Ganesha Mantra" are more electronic than metal; the former swathed in sequenced guitar and synthesizer melodies on a looped drum rhythm - the synthesizers sound more like Welle:Erdball than anything metallic. The latter of the two is even farther out, it's basically a seriously cool techno song with metal guitars, heavy on the Indian influences in percussion and vocalisation. "Propesko" on the other hand is a bluesy ballad, complete with organs, hoarse almost-out-of-tune singing, and echoing guitar licks. But it still sounds like MASTER'S HAMMER - like the mentioned rocks, they form natural parts of the whole landscape.

With Mantras, MASTER'S HAMMER efficiently show that you don't have to try to prove anything, be it how dark and evil, weird and experimental or profound and poetic you are. They have gone many miles beyond having to prove anything. For MASTER'S HAMMER, it is about doing what you want, what you feel like. Enjoy life, or whatever. It's your problem, ultimately. A very liberating attitude nowadays when Extreme Metal has become more pretentious than ever. MASTER'S HAMMER is about something else. About [going fishing](#) perhaps, or spending quality time with [your friends](#). And you hear that.

Note: If you want to buy this album, I suggest you try the label link above to buy it directly from the band.

aVoid

MARS ON EARTH

Mars On Earth

Release: 2001

Label: [Red Stream Records](#)

Avantgenre: Industrial Darkwave Black Metal

Duration: 22:37

Origin: Mars

Official

site: <http://www.myspace.com/marsonearthmuzik>



The marching snare and the dramatic synths are a good start, and the explosion of samples is a fitting culmination to the intro.

The first song "Planets" starts off with more samples, all very sci-fi, but then the big guitars and double-bass kick in with the heady synths, and you know its going to be a heavy ride. The vox are of the death/black croaky rasp variety. Just when you think you have a handle on this, in comes another mid-song industrial piece, and then back to the atonal extreme metal. Then another hyper industrial-synth bit and so on. This is strange, to say the least.

"Die Stadt Ist Im Krieg" starts off with more dark strings, bells and timpani building to atonal extreme metal. There is an unearthly anthropobic quality to it (though the lyrics are beyond me), and elements of Mayhem circa Grand Declaration of War (minus the hyper blasting) and Alastis can be felt in places. The rhythms

are all suitably varied, and the militaristic feel is present throughout, but coupled with the strange synths it just sounds plain bizarre.

"Bleeding Underwater" is again introduced by a now typical Mars on Earth intro but explodes with a faster more traditional cyber black metal sound (though still not blast paced). This is predictably broken by a gothic keyboard break to go back to the full-pedal industrial black metal motif. The song progresses to include some beautifully juxtaposed instrumentations and vocals. My only complaint with this release is that it is over too quickly.

This MCD is a promising release. Fans of AGBM are advised to direct their attention here.

This album is available for a SPECIAL PRICE of 3 \$ at [RED STREAM!](#)

Suleiman

MYSTICUM

In The Streams Of Inferno

Release: 1996

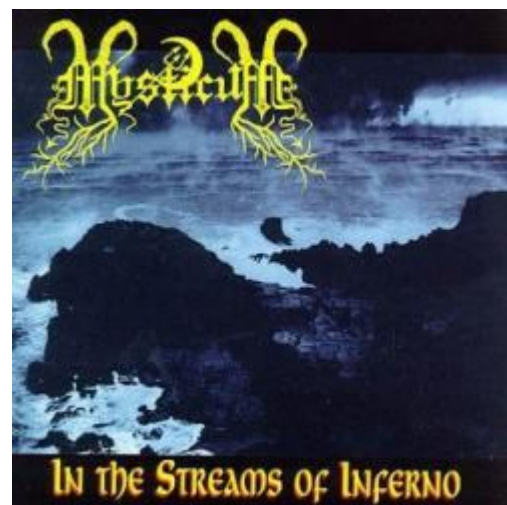
Label: Full Moon Records

Avantgenre: Digital Extreme Inferno Metal

Duration: 36:35

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/mysticum>



If someone would start a competition to point out the most evil and grim avantgarde Black Metal band of all time, Mysticum would be one of the top favourites to win the price. I mean, these guys were signed by the mighty father of all Norwegian vampires, Mr. Euronymous, himself, on Deathlike Silence Records.

Who of those wanna-be-evil-worshippers of today is able to claim something just close to this? Secondly, the sound on their debut "In the Streams of Inferno" is even more high-pitched and invidious than the

guitar-razorblades on "Nattens Madrigal". Thirdly, these guys support the "Never stop the madness"-campaign which supports the use (or abuse, as you like) of hard drugs. Shall I go on? No, I think we can all agree, regardless how much of this might be slapstick, "In the Streams of Inferno" is a damn cult release.

Back in 1995 the psychos around vocalist and guitarist Prime Evil were the first to combine ingredients of harsh, cold and merciless Industrial (mainly digital drums and various samples) with the sharp and

ugly sound of True Norwegian Black Metal. If you take in consideration that this is the one and only official album till today, you get an idea of how intense the material must be, as the band was able to influence a whole generation of angry avantgarde-metal musicians just with one output. Soon after, the fruits of this unholy motherhood could be tasted on masterpieces like "666 International" or "With no Human Intervention".

Today, more than one decade after the release, it is hard to analyse this album. With an unemotional and sober approach one has to come to the conclusion, that this is crap and not worth one penny. The sound is rather dilettantish, the electronic drums are blustering without any kind of creativity and the keyboards annoy with their common tone and melody themes.

On the other hand, and now we leave the spheres of rational reception, the atmosphere on "In the Streams of Inferno" is simply magic. The artistic coolness of Mysticum combined with the rather evil and possessed vocals, spreads a poisoned spirit, which is in these times, where extreme metal has become nothing more than cheap mental fast food, a welcome revelation of the sick and poisoned genesis of Norwegian Black Metal. Myticum's music should be hence labelled and evaluated as a relict of music history. A metal record which is old fashioned, musically unspectacular and trashy, but in the same time represents a bridge between two important evolutionary stages of extreme metal.

Polygon

NAMELESS ORCHESTRAL PROJECT

Gott Ist Tot

Release: 2007

Label: [Epiphora Productions](#)

Avantgenre: Industrial Black Thrash

Duration: 49:51

Origin: France

Official site: <http://myspace.com/namelessop>



Here be goodness ! Though a bit late in reviewing this masterpiece of French metal insanity, this surely deserves a lot more hype and reviews then it actually got on its release. Though most references to this outfit describe it as some form of black metal, I found it to be more of industrial thrash release (albeit moody and blackened).

It starts out (after a short but apt sample) fast and furious with the relentless and thrashy "Smells like Divine Composition". There are nice interludes with a nice fat bass, and vocals that recall early 90's thrash. The riffing is a throwback to some classic Euro-thrash along with more black metal oriented styles. There are some nice

samples along the way. "I.N.R.I" continues the catchy assault, with a great (and hum able) opening riff. The industrial elements in all tracks are reinforced by the stop start nature of composition and guitar playing as well as the various samples interspersed through out the album. The final element that firmly places NOP in the industrial extreme metal genre is the programmed drumming, that actually adds to the album's relentless assaulting vibe (instead of detracting like so many contemporaries). The vocals vary through out, going from the aforementioned thrash to hardcore shouting to black metal-ish screams often in the same song, making for some great variety. The riffing also alternates between the industrial black

thrash guitar work of the majority of the tunes and some more death metal influenced tremolo picking and structures ("The Problem of Evil", also standing out for the robo-vocals and the rather melodic emotive outro).

"No Religion Know Peace" is short sample laden atmospheric piece that will hook you right in and begs repeated listens due to its brevity. Though at first the song titles seem typical of the genres, as you delve into the lyrics they appear well thought out and rather poignant in places (not to say that the album lacks some bona fide black metal clichés in places, but it all adds to the effect).

"Under the Hellspell" is a mid-paced romp through Celtic Frost in Ministry's dune-buggy. "The Absurd Song" is another mid-tempo tune that shows NOP mutating hard rock rhythms to their own twisted vision and topping it with black metal and gothic vocals. "DCLXVI" has some great

epic sounding haunting piece. "Still Waiting" again ventures into new ground with some nice fast and melodic guitar and vocal work. Over the course of the record, I realized these guys are over the metal map in terms of sound, yet have a sense of song writing that makes it all cohesive.

I was rather surprised at the high level of quality of the recording as well as composition, in a scene that is too saturated with half-assed attempts at such sounds. This band is definitely sincere, and extremely talented. They are recommended to everyone looking for a new vitamin in their extreme metal diet. Here's to many more slices of experimenting metal madness from this outfit. The band's mastermind Ben is also organizing a Pink Floyd tribute album (?!!) which will surely be a trip in itself.

Suleiman

OBLIVEON

Carnivore Mothermouth

Release: 1999

Label: Hypnotic Records

Avantgenre: Industrial Cyber Dark Thrash Metal

Duration: 39:26

Origin: Canada

Official site:

<http://www.myspace.com/obliveonmusic>



One of the most underrated extreme metal outfits of all time, this band's swan-song was a genre defining work that put most other bands of this ilk to shame.

This, along with Ministry's Psalm 69, SYL's City and Red Harvest's Cold Dark Matter, pretty much is the standard for cyber metal, though being very different from them. Imagine the perfect cyber thrash outfit, forgoing the generic chugga chugga, cheap synth tweaks and basic nu-metallish tendencies of most 'indus-

trial' metal outfits for a maturity born from a more musically proficient background, with layers of intricacy providing a cohesive and dark listening experience. The sound is a mix of cutting-edge heavy thrash with plenty of stop-start riffing and dissonant chords (ala Killing Joke) splashed here and there, eerie sounding electronica (without resorting to clichés) and a mix of extremely powerful gothic vocals and more typical thrash growls/rasps. The end result is a unique sonic signature that deserves to be heard

by any and all fans of 21st century extreme metal. The best thing about the album is that all the songs here show prowess to pen addictive and catchy tunes without comprising or simplifying the sound one iota.

Highlights include "Devil In My Eyes", which will raise your hair ends, the horn-worthy "Technicarnivore Motormouth" and as well as the jittering "Such a Quite River", all featuring a cohesive mix of apocalyptic doomy sounding riffery (imagine Neurosis riffs in Cyber Thrash context!!!) and industrial power and grooving metal.

By the time "D ésert Incorporé!" rolls over your stunned corpse, it is all over too

quickly you cannot help but move one undead cybernautic finger to the replay button.

This basically takes everything from their last release "Cybervoid" to perfection. The magic permeating the entire record's proceedings is just unbelievable. Honestly, to this day I still look for a band capable of coming close to this sound. I sometimes wonder where they could have taken this band's concept if they hadn't disbanded at their prime.

Suleiman

ORGAN:

7" EP

Release: August 2009

Label: [Duplicate Records](#)

Avantgenre: Trippy/Glitch Black'n'Roll

Duration: 12:57

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/organproject>



What have we here... 3 tracks -two songs and an interlude- comprising an EP which takes 3 seconds less than 13 minutes to introduce the listener in uncharted spaces and back to the real world... or not? Do I stay there yet? This glitched sonic rainbow may have made me look at things in another way, sometimes more colored, sometimes just glitchy. Anyway the shapes are more twisted, the colors more vibrant and the sounds chippier and intermixed after you listen to these tracks.

As for the metal side of it, **Organ:** play a light-distortion psychedelic black'n'roll with double kicks and blastbeats, noises, sampled voices, droney ambiences in a mixture never tasted before. The riffs are colorful and smell like mist and rain on a sunny day, seen through the metal-framed window of a skyscraper factory.

There are no vocals, the music is driven by the riff progression and accompanied by ambience sounds and voice samples, or by the glitches that happen to the same riff almost all over the track #3. The production is kind of strange yet clear and beautiful, sometimes full of things you didn't even know existed. These tracks just make you hear them.

Now I will further dissect the 7" vinyl, making a script track by track:

1) Wok Wok

Frequency modulated riff to confusing happy start with ambience and talking voices and screams Rainbowlike psychedelic chromatic progression Noised abyssic underwater life riff Chromatic double bass drums to blastbeat in hallucinogenic

rapture Rainbowy painless happy hango-
ver to confusion and enjoyable disorienta-
tionWeird biomechanical dancing to fre-
quency modulation end

2) *Mandolin* Floating in between of the
outskirts of nowhere interlude

3) *Bossanova* Glitch drone start to
glitched gloomy atmosphere to same with
various electro beats and glitchy warping
fills, full of giltches, to ambience to glitchy
satisfactory end

Organ: have made an unexpected move for
the avant-garde metal scene with this EP,
I think so even after having listened previ-
ously to their demo '*Apoplexy in six parts*',
which was already quite surprising; I hope
they develop their personal mark further
into a full length album soon. Then we
can have legal and cheaper hallucinosonic
drugs instead of everyday drugs for more
than just 13 minutes.

Adryuu

PSALM

Threshold Of Pain

Release: 1997

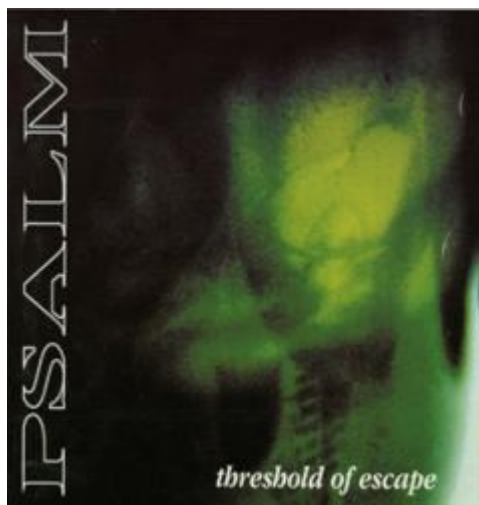
Label: [Self Released](#)

Avantgenre: Industrial Death Metal

Duration: 35:35

Origin: France

Official site: <http://na>



The debut release from this French four
piece is a forgotten gem of a record. I only
got my hands on this via an mp3 CD sent
to me containing all various projects of a
certain Monseur Boris Doussy.

From the first note this is hook laden bru-
tality all the way. The band claimed Minis-
try and Godflesh as influences, but
sounds more like a mix of The Swans and
Grave. The opening title track floored me
with the classic DM riffing, and aptly sav-
age arrangement interspersed with the
gothic emotional mid-part. Some disso-
nant riffing here and there greatly lifts the
final product above the hordes of 90's DM.

"Sweet Virtual Picture" has a more cyber
thrash feel (Voivod maybe), and the
chunky groove makes way for the more
brutal death metal segues. This band
could have gone places, had they been on
the right label at the right time, as the
swirling dissonance/blasts juxtaposition
in the song attests. Monseur Boris could

have coded this at a higher bit-rate than
the basic 128 kbps, as it does the already
muddy 90's DM demo production no fav-
ors (though strangely nostalgic of what
was easily the golden era of extreme met-
al). "Perpetual Change - my Desire" con-
tinues the cyber onslaught. Stop start
riffing and those haunting open string
chords make for some great metal. They
again battles it out with death metal to
devastating effect. All six songs on this
release follow the same building blocks:
death metal, some Meshugga-ish thrash,
Voivod/Killing Joke atmospherics and a
maturity in composition. Give this is a
modern production and instrument tones
and thus could take any modern contend-
er to the cyber-death Thrash throne head
on.

Thankfully it completely manages to avoid
the yawn inducing Fear Factory theatrics
so prevalent then and now. "The Unknown
Sensation" another great and dark riff and
that old Swans groove, as well as chanting

vocals, all of which is shot to hell with the (now expected) barrage of thrashy death. This song features another great section riff and best exemplifies all that the band offered. All songs here are 6 minutes or more, but the band keeps things varied and spliced up with enough interesting twists and turns to warrant repeated listens. The charged closer "The Last Dream" nicely ends this underground classic, a monument to a time when bands knew

how to make vibrant interesting death metal.

Alas this is also the only thing the band released before members moved on to other projects, including the totally insane Bristol Meyers Squibb (reviewed elsewhere).

Suleiman

RAM-ZET

Pure Therapy

Release: 2000

Label: Spikefarm Records

Avantgenre: Black Industrial Gothic Nu Metal

Duration: 50:24

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.ram-zet.com>



.....
Fat rhythmic guitar riffs in the typical Nu Metal style, powerful mid-tempo drums, guttural vocals, spiced with keyboards and elektro sounds – Is this Ram-Mstein? No, it's the debut-album of Ram-Zet. At the first listening I got very annoyed. Around the year 2000 there have been so many bands trying to create a very modern millenium-sound, mixing the popular Rammstein-guitars with futuristic elements. Ram-Zet seemed to be another of those bands with big, modernistic production and little new ideas. So I immediately fell asleep.

But when I woke up I found myself in a sparkling world. Trivial riffs and fat production are just the commercial foreground of "Pure Therapy". As soon as their winsome rhythms and melodies have caught your ears they start to mutate.

The rhythms get complex and winded. The melodies get exotic, sometimes dissonant, sometimes oriental. One of the biggest strengths of Ram-Zet are the elaborate arrangements. Driving headbanger riffs are joined by slow violins and sweet angel voices. Peculiar weird themes melt into catchy tunes. Dramatic and bombastic parts flow into peaceful ambient-scapes. Everything is very varied and colorful. And it fits perfectly together. Ram-Zet have their unique style somewhere between Industrial, Gothic-Wave, Alternative and tons of all kinds of Metal. They are one of the very few bands, that are catchy and commercial, but also avantgardistic and innovative at the same time.

Chrystof

RED HARVEST

Sick Transit Gloria Mundi

Release: 2002

Label: [Relapse](#)

Avantgenre: Overseas Manufacturing Metal

Duration: 63:32

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.redharvest.com>



Red Harvest's sixth release, "Sick Transit Gloria Mundi," is a punishing piece of work that would just as soon pummel the listener as rock their socks off- it does a little of both. Crushing heavy, insistently bleak, surprisingly fast on its feet, with a strong undercurrent of dystopian futurism, the album plays like the angry version of a 1970s JG Ballard story. Fast, razor sharp electro beats pound away under a wall of grinding guitars and snarled vocals. A few songs, especially the machine age anthem "Godtech," slow things down for a bit of epic grandeur. The opening line "In a world controlled by ma-

chines, humans identify with machines" conveys the tone, a picture of a world mired in industrial waste and concrete ruins, lorded over by blind faith in technology. The band also covers GGFH's "Dead Men Don't Rape," a pulverizing, head smashing take on an old feminist slogan. The album is like being crushed under the weight of the state and capital, under a deluge of discarded plastic and old tires. The result is a morass of pleasant ugliness. Recommended reading: Herbert Marcuse's "One Dimensional Man"

James Slone

SAMAEI

Eternal

Release: 1999

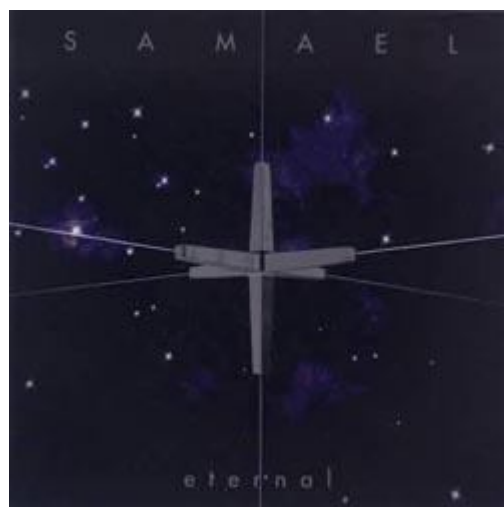
Label: Century Media

Avantgenre: Industrial Metal Future Pop

Duration: 47:19

Origin: Switzerland

Official site: None



Samael's "Eternal" is remarkably catchy for an industrial metal album, sounding like disco music from a parallel dimension where state socialism worked and the So-

viet Union won the Cold War, a kind of worker state rock n' roll. I'm sure Samael don't quite see it that way, but with the utopian lyrics, the synthesizer drenched

choruses, and hammer clanging industrial beats ("Together" sounds like a totalitarian anthem), the music is like something you'd hear over the PA at the end of history. Someone might read this and say "hey, but Laibach already did that!" but not like this. Where Laibach revel in a certain pomposity and schmaltzy aloofness- Samael is smooth and catchy, like monolithic dance music. Their actual lyrics offer romantic yearning for an authentically better world instead of Stalinism or nationalism, and the band writes love songs-

they sound tough and militaristic but reveal a band who are basically nice Swiss guys. The album takes the excessiveness of metal and industrial and runs it through a dance filter, polishing it off with a big production. Scarily powerful, blissfully intense, infectious groovy, and sometimes quite beautiful, "Eternal" is like an collection of love songs from a post-human world.

James Slone

SCORN

Vae Solis

Release: 1992

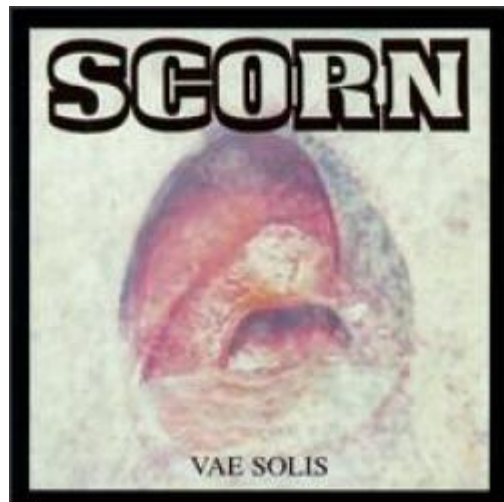
Label: Earache

Avantgenre: Grind House (get It?)

Duration: 1:15

Origin: United Kingdom

Official site: <http://www.mickharris.net/>



Napalm Death, aside from creating the grind genre, are also noteworthy for having spawned several important solo projects. The original members fanned out on their own, creating unique aural spaces to ply their extreme trade. Mick Harris' contribution to this abundant output was Scorn, a project that retained a harsh grind ambiance before jettisoning the violence in favor of haunting dub soundscapes.

"Vae Solis" kicked things off, a brutal hammering attack out of the Killing Joke playbook with Harris's pounding industrial grade beats, buzzsaw guitars sharp enough to cut steel (courtesy Justin Broadrick), and Nick Bullen's pulsating bass and nauseatingly lethargic vocals. The only thing that could make this album any sicker would be blastbeats and squawking free range saxophone- for that, see Painkiller, Mick Harris's delightfully painful collaboration with John Zorn and Bill Laswell.

"Vae Solis" is noisy and repetitious in a classic industrial mode, but retains a pop catchiness, a certain punk groove that makes it almost seem musical. There are moments of near silence scattered like detritus across the album's total war wasteland, dark ambient moments of near horror garnished with creepy samples. As the album progresses, the beats become more danceable. "On Ice" is as catchy as anything composed by Ministry, warmed over with a programmed synth line straight out of New Wave.

The album hints at a Napalm Death that might have been if the band had abandoned political anger for aggressive introspection and sordid atmospherics. It's ugly, like a bloated corpse in a filthy public restroom, but it's absolutely hypnotic, deliriously sick and twisted, and in its own grimy way, a gem.

James Slone

SQUIBB VS. SQUIBB

Squibb Vs. Squibb

Release: 2002

Label: Self Released

Avantgenre: Post Dance Industrial For The People Of The Future

Duration: 35:42

Origin: France

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/borisdoussy>



Oh boy, how does one describe Squibb vs. Squibb, Boris Doussy and Mathieu Megamont's surreal and oddly cosmopolitan trip into the stellar regions of extreme music, without name dropping?

The music reminds me of 1970s Heavy Metal magazine covers; it sounds like music you'd hear emanating from a club in the dank alleys of the shambling super cities of the future, a little like Foetus or later-period Ulver, only louder, with droning tribal rhythms overlaid with the beeps and whistles of factory equipment, marinated in primitive chanting calling out from an ancient, long forgotten civilization. Bluesy melody lines appear out of nowhere, sounding hauntingly rustic in this hyper-technological context, like a cowboy sauntering into a Martian colony. Occasionally, the noise will abate, revealing a dubbed out rhythm gluing it all together with ganja scented soulfulness. Am I making any sense so far?

Boris' voice winds through the music like an alien presence, invading every nook and cranny with stoned chants, low to-

bacco stained singing and bizarre quasi-black metal growls you might find in a mid-1990s Summoning song. Sometimes, he'll employ jazz and blues vocals to go with the jazz guitar that occasionally pops up, breaking up the industrial machine sounds with something considerably more swinging.

The music's guiding principle seems to be taking disparate music and noises from all over the musical spectrum and layering them in a complex web of sounds and then making it danceable with heavy, syncopated electro beats designed to move booties. And yet, despite the beats, the music is so heavy, so utterly un-commercial, like dance pop for an alien civilization.

If you want something genuinely strange, monumentally large and yet somehow intensely catchy, something that makes you feel as though you've stumbled out of a time machine and into a dance club circa 2089, I have an album for you.

James Slone

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD

City

Release: 1997

Label: [Century Media Records](#)

Avantgenre: Industrial Thrash Power Metal

Duration: 40 Minutes

Origin: Canada / USA

Official site: <http://www.strappingyounglad.com/>



With this one it's hard to know where to begin. How about "the heaviest finest angriest slab of cyber metal ever"? This record came, conquered and remained on the throne. It pretty much defines what can be accomplished with the proper amalgamation of extreme metal and industrial music (along with Ministry and Red Harvest, of course).

Opening with a flooring but short intro in "Velvet Kevorkian" which segues into the face-ripping "All Hail the New Flesh", the record quickly and explosively establishes its sound and identity. The song that follows up the intensity another notch is the headbanging anthem "Oh My Fucking God". Thrash (and some Death/Grind) riffage layered with all manners of samples and synths, backed by the rhythm section from hell (how can you go wrong with Gene Hoglan on drums?) races along, all topped off with some of the most original vocals in metal (Devin Townsend is a phenomena unto himself, going from tough guy vocals to screeches and screams to heart wrenching wails and singing, all in the same song and all suitably reverbed).

It is a winning mix, especially when the brutality is contrasted by slower, more atmospheric and intensely emotional sections, where the synths, guitars and vo-

cal make a strangely ambient melodic mix creating a wall-of-sound that became Devin's trademark. Another ace of the band is the lyrical content, which is angry and direct (to the point of almost being punk/hardcore) and clearly understandable, thanks to the amazing production job (courtesy of Devin himself, with engineering by Daniel of Meshuggah fame).

All the songs here are killer, catchy and epic at the same time (something which is very hard to achieve). They flow seamlessly and the sequence makes perfect sense. As Devin has repeatedly stated in interviews, it is his catharsis and it shows. Many of the themes here are developed further on subsequent SYL and DTB releases, but none comes close to the sheer insanity of this record. The Cop Shoot Cop cover is a great choice and brings variety to the record, while still sounding like a SYL tune.

All in all, this is one of the top metal releases of all time, and still sounds as refreshing and vibrant today as the day it was released. If you haven't had the pleasure, pick it up today for a truly cerebral yet vicious metal experience.

Suleiman

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms That You Are Alive

Release: 2007

Label: [Self Released](#)

Avantgenre: Death-Industrial Dream Metal

Duration: 41:43

Origin: Italy

Official site: <http://www.symptoms.altervista.org/>



It begins beautifully with a strange wisp of a synth that explodes in a full-blooded metal harmony, and then the groove locks in. The vocals and riffing place this firmly in the extreme metal camp, but it is the drum machine (which may have benefited from a better kit sound), strange feedback noises and those bizarre synths that truly propel this beyond into something else.

This is way ahead of the Obituary meets Ministry via Killing Joke styling of the debut. It has a strange atmosphere: obviously apocalyptic yet somehow enchanting, kind of like post-black death metal without resorting to any of the clichés of that much flogged dead horse. Do not get me wrong - the sound is too wholesome to be black metal. Just the mood is wistful, anthemic and magical in places. And when it's coupled with the more typical disjointed death metal riffing and vocals it just gets unstoppable. Instead of going for the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink-trick of most modern bands of this ilk, Symptoms stay true to a strong songwriting tradition, while utilizing the avant garde tendencies as hooks to great effect.

The interludes are plain bizarre, going much further than the standard few samples and beeps, to actually be complete entities in themselves, with totally involv-

ing atmospherics and intricate rhythms at play. There is even a strange gap in the opener "Dead for 30 Seconds" that I'm still not sure is intentional.

But the way the dreamy soundscapes are ripped apart by brutal death metal guitars is strange juxtaposition and may even be too much for some. When it all comes together (the afore mentioned 'hooks' of the songs) there's just plain jaw-dropping: the choir-synth-guitar /double bass culmination in "City Lights" or the way the outro of said song leads right into the harmonic intro of the manic, driving "Mental Disorder". You really will drift of to strange places as the album progresses. There is this truly unique sounding lead (synth or guitar?) that is overlaid over the more traditional aggro-riffing in a lot of songs that puts the entire thing into a new perspective.

All in all, this is a welcome addition to a growing army of new cyber-avant bands that are pushing the boundaries of metal into inner and outer space. Do yourself a favour and get it now directly from the band.

Suleiman

TECHNY-CALL X

Start The Process

Release: 2007

Label: Self Released

Avantgenre: Dark Dance Metal

Duration: 16:21

Origin: France

Official site: <http://www.technycallx.com/>



Cruising out of France on the wings of technology and a cold rage, this is a solid effort from the beginning to the end. By the second song the style of the band is immediately recognizable. It is a dark, aggressive and danceable sound, full of atmosphere and groove. The quality of the material holds up to repeated listens. The songs have a definite club friendly feel without catering to the base denominator. That means it reminds you less of goth club scene in a Hollywood flick and more of an actual dance floor full of antagonistic cyborgs. Thankfully the riff styling and synth sequences place them firmly in the Euro scene as opposed to the post-NIN abominations of America. And the vocals do that dark, slightly distorted almost-growl, filled out with a gothic baritone. Imagine a mix of darkwave and Exodus

era Samael with a hint of Red Harvest. Electro Metal fans should definitely give this a try.

It is too short even for an EP, and you just wish there were more songs here. There are very occasional traces of the cheesiness of Deathstars and Pain. But they are so sparse that it adds to the vibe. The EP achieves the (desired) effect in that the listener wants more. What wonders will the full length bring? Surely it cannot be an entire CD full of mid-paced dark dance metal. But if there is someone capable of pulling it off, it is these guys.

And that is about all I can write based on 3 songs (and 1 intro).

Suleiman

THEE MALDOROR COLLECTIVE

New Era Viral Order

Release: 2002

Label: [Code 666](#)

Avantgenre: Robotic Alien Metal

Duration: 48:52

Origin: Italy

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/jailhousedog>



These guys have been active more or less since 1991. Starting with Black Metal under the name FUNERAL FOG, they rec-

orded three demos until they changed their name to MALDOROR. They recorded several demos and two full-length albums

under that name, until changing their name again into THEE MALDOROR KOLLECTIVE. The first album that sprung forth with their new name was "New Era Viral Order"; which is what I have got here, but let us take a quick look into the future before coming back to 2001.

Only one band can compare with their career, at least with the development in their musical style, and that is- ULVER. From Black Metal, which gets more and more wrapped up in electronic elements, to Jazz and Trip Hop- and from what I interpret from their MySpace-Site, they are doing some kind of atmospheric soundtrack right now. Parallels obvious? Oh by the way, they seem to have their name changed again into T/M/K.

Back to the album N.E.V.O.- (it is shorter that way, maybe that is why they changed their name to T/M/K- goes more smoothly as THEE MALDOROR KOLLECTIVE, right?) Not much unlike their fellow countrymen of ENSOPH, what you will listen to is heavily synthed Black/ Dark Metal with shredding guitars and cold, mechanic effects. Maybe a reminiscence to their earlier days, the second Track "Haemorrhage Transmission" features even blastbeats; but the rest of the album is midtempo - massive, stomping beats with the guitars providing the aggression. Above all spheric, laser-like synths and the aggressive

shouts of vocalist Kundahli. Think of T/M/K (there- it IS much easier) as a slower, more dense version of ABORYM- although T/M/K are even more into the mechanical approach of their music. This manifests in occasional beeps, sweeps, robotic speech and almost dance-like synth melodies as well as samples. Somehow they manage to avoid the point where this would get on my nerves; I have to admit the omnipresent synth is not exactly my cup of tea. But, it fits this album well, and the interspersed ambient passages do their part to make it interesting and diversified.

If you are into one of the above mentioned bands, check out T/M/K. I for once have to be in the right mood to listen to this, but when I am, it rocks. Should you stumble upon another album of T/M/K wondering what the heck I am writing here about and why nothing I mention applies to what YOU were listening- go ahead, go show ULVER's "Nattens Madrigal" to someone, followed by let us say "Blood Inside" and then tell him/her this is the same band. None of T/M/K's albums is representative or repetitive, and N.E.V.O. is but a step in their evolution.

Tentakel P.

THE AMENTA

Occasus

Release: 2004

Label: [Listenable Records](#)

Avantgenre: Screeching Industrified Death Metal

Duration: 41:52

Origin: Australia

Official site: <http://www.theamenta.com>



The first glimpse I got from THE AMENTA was a promotional photo. Back then I thought: "fife guys posing for the Dimmu-Borgir-lookalike-contest, so what..." I was expecting some kind of this new, trendy-

evil gothic-industrial bands like Deathstars and the like. Boy, was I wrong. Luckily, THE AMENTA are lightyears away from this genre, celebrating a mix of highly skilled technical Death/ Black/ Indus-

trial Metal. Band members recruit from several Death Metal and Grindcore bands; the most renowned of them probably ABORTED from which Diazanon (Dave Haley) on Drums hails.

It is difficult to describe THE AMENTA's sound to anyone not knowing them- because what you will hear here is something which to my best knowledge has not been heard anywhere else before. Search in vain for catchy melodies, simple song-structures and the like- what you will find here is hyperspeed doublebass and extreme fast blastbeats as well as Cesium 137's growls and screams accompanied by guitars which not so much play melodies, but create eerie, spherical noises.

All of this is interrupted by industrial soundscapes which remind me a bit of the atmosphere in the early Alien-Films. THE AMENTA are sterile, alien, hostile and cold - two bands come to my mind when listening to them, namely THORNS and ZYKLON; combine the cold machine sound of the first with the screeching, banshee-like guitarwork from the latter; multiply that and you reach the soundscapes of THE AMENTA.

Only one song could possibly be described to be in the style of traditional songwriting, which is "Nihil"- a great, double-bass-based mosh-monster with so much as a catchy melody. The rest of the songs are best labeled as lightning- fast hymns to destruction. This was not made for humans, or any other organic life. It makes most of the wannabe-evil-cold Black Metal bands look as if they perform happy dance-hymns for birthday parties in comparison. It is brutal, aggressive, dissonant and industrial. If you want easy listening, stay away like hell- this album will disintegrate your ears. But anyway, as you read this on Avantgarde-Metal you will probably not expect easy listening... You have been warned. I for once await their second album "nOn" which will hopefully be released this year.

I will conclude this with THE AMENTA's own words:

"Extreme music for an age rotting to rags. Do you want traditional? Do you want safe? Do you want the sound of a million brainless hacks slaving away on thrash solos learned by rote from guitar magazines? The Amenta is NOT FOR YOU."

Tentakel P.

THE KOVENANT

Seti

Release: 2003

Label: [Nuclear Blast](#)

Avantgenre: Aperitif Rock Digestif

Duration: 01:07:29

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.gentechranch.tk/>



Today I had a sandwich for lunch. No big thing actually, I did not listen to music while eating my creation. In case you want to listen to this album I suggest the following food for each song. Please note that some meals need prior preperation before being served. Mahlzeit!

#01: Some asian noodel snack that is cooked within 3 minutes.

#02: Some vanilla ice cream, schocolate cream, a banana and some rasped nuts.

#03: Fruit salad. Add cans of your favourite fruit into a big bowl, add some sugar and off you go.

#04: Meat. Put into a a pan with heated oil. As side dish I suggest some well cocked rice.

#05: Pudding with gummy bears or jelly beans. I recomend some icing sugar on top.

#06: This song is 4:11 which is pretty much the time Barilla noodles (No. 3) take to be serveable.

#07: Salad. Add vinegar/oil, salt, pepper, some onions/garlic and some dried tomatos. Serve with fresh white bread.

#08: Cut meat into small pieces, add sea salt oil and vinegar, let the meat soak in that soup for 1-2 hours and then cook it shortly on a light flame; serve with small

potatoes that have been in silverfoil in the stove for at least 30'.

#09: Take a big potatoe and fill it with sour cream, garlic, pepper and all kind of spices (oregano, thyme,...). Use the oven to heat that mofo up.

#10: Pre-fabricated ravioli should go well with this song.

#11: Order a pizza from your local pizza delivery. Suggestion: a simple Margharita with Onions.

#12: Cook water, add one or two corncobs and let them cook for 4-6 minutes. Serve with butter and salt.

Jonny Lignano

TRISTWOOD

The Delphic Doctrine

Release: 2006

Label: [Sound Riot Records](#)

Avantgenre: Industrial Death Black Metal

Duration: 42:18

Origin: Austria

Official site: <http://www.tristwood.com>



.....
Aaaaah !! Finally!! After reviewing all manners of insane sound forms that are often at the very edge of metal, here is one assigned to me that is as metal as beer, sacrificed virgins and spiked studs. This here is some seriously brutal atmospheric death metal. And atmospheric I don't mean doomy or slow; I mean reeking of evil darkness. I don't have a lyric sheet or a CD sleeve even but somehow I wouldn't be surprised if the themes were cosmic, satanic, hermetic or plain murderous (even a combination of some/all of the above).

It starts with a very short intro and then its blasts all the way, with a few more similarly short synthy intros scattered through out.. The riffing and song-writing is straight forward and lightning fast. The growls are done in the classic demonic death metal vein (think Massacre, Septic Flesh and mid-period Behemoth)with an occasional dashing of a more mid-ranged rasp (no ultra high pitched shrieking, than you very much). There is a dark almost cyber sheen to the material, courtesy of the background but ever present synths (which occasionally come forth as per requirement), and the too precise drumming

(is it or is it not a drum machine?), as well the perfect production.

I know it sounds like a million other bands, but there is something about the songs that just stick. The riffing knows where to stand out, without going into wankery, and the stuff is catchy. There wasn't a single part where I thought 'I wish they hadn't done that' and that

means its damn near perfect as a slice of metal brutality. For those into the heavier end of the spectrum check this shit out. Hail !!!

(Though for the sake of criticism, this isn't very Avant Garde at all).

Suleiman

UNHEALTHY DREAMS

Doloris Corpus

Release: 2007

Label: Selfreleased

Avantgenre: Synthetic Industrial Mayhem

Duration: 20 Min

Origin: France

Official site: <http://www.unhealthy-dreams.com>



Wow!.....no, not "World of warcraft", but a real "wow!". Before I write anything about the "Body of pain" (Latin. doloris corpus) one has to be aware that France started giving us quite a lot of great and weird bands (the invisible giants- Deathspell Omega, Smohalla, the growing audible chaos, and some that yet have to be discovered like Dreams of the Drowned). Unhealthy Dreams is one of the most brutal deities of the fast rising scene. The band creates the pain of modern humanity through their chaotic music. When you take a look at the cover of "Doloris Corpus" you can expect somekind of a chaotic industrial mania, but when you put it into the stereo, it will just hit you in the face, you won't see it coming! Why?!

The production is very clear, but nevertheless the audible mayhem is colossal, ranging from the bass lines up to every electronic squeak. The tracks tend to be very fast, but they are often broken apart by some pure electronical passages, the second track even features a charming flute. The contrast is interesting as the electronical parts are sometimes quite calming, while the rest of the music is very fast and nervous, one could compare this with a

behavior of a person suddenly struck with waves of dementia. Just like the instrumental parts the vocals vary very much, from an ofu-khanish style in the beginning to a more high pitched black screaming style. I am not sure if this is my impression but somehow the album tends to get more and more electronical as it is closer to it's end. The vicious and nervous guitars become more steady, but not softer, don't worry. Electronica and the samples used on "Wolves torment" is purely great, the track being filled with distorted beats and raw industrial samples.

The atmosphere of the whole album is very cold, razor-sharp and solid. This is an example of a great industrial production (or destruction) and mastering, not being too loud so one can absorb all of the elements, and not being too noisy as Red Harvest sometimes manages to be. Nevertheless this is one of the best surprises in the industrialized sphere of our weird music this year. I hope Unhealthy Dreams shall get all the attention a promising band like that deserves. Now I recommend that you get lost in this swirl of pain you can hear on "Corpus Doloris".....get lost.....
Ulv

VOLKMAR

Overture Macabre Demo

Release: 2007

Label: [Self-Released](#)

Avantgenre: Evil Rock

Duration: 21:52

Origin: Australia

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/volkmarsins>



A nice short demo that amply demonstrates this up and coming band's arsenal. This is an interesting exercise in rocking gloomy metal. There is a cloak of darkness over the entire thing, and rather than coming across like the whining and sad caterwauling of typical gothic metal, this sounds threatening. You know, like those bands from the mid-80's that had an undercurrent of violence in their taut guitar bass drum (and synth) setup. This also benefits from a sense of history as the band appears to have heard the 90's dark and black metal boom (Moonspell, Samael, Enslaved), besides the obvious bows at the altars of Sisters of Mercy, Bauhaus and Fields of Nephilim.

"Eyes Sewn Shut" begins the assault with driving backbone and rewards with calmer yet blacker mid-section before returning to the beat/ riff barrage. "Walk with Me" continues the gothic mosh, with a vintage dark chord progression. "Journey Below" shows another side to the band's sound. A

bit slower, a bit moodier with an esoteric anthemic chorus you may find yourself humming at the next black mass.

The guitars are simple and straightforward but perfect for the rather catchy and dark songwriting. When the crunchy noir-riffs are complemented with the spooky synths and the vintage drumkit, it is indeed an enjoyable spin, with the singer painting tales of horror, the occult and morbidity in his rather grim yet melodic baritone, we have a little gem of modern goth.

It is only four songs (plus one short horror movie mood piece at the end) but it gets the job done. I have heard that the debut album proper will have a much better production. If so, Vision Bleak et al should get ready for the competition.

Suleiman

VOLKMAR

Blessed Sins

Release: 2008

Label: [Modern Invasion Music](#)

Avantgenre: Syngoth Metal

Duration: 49:22

Origin: Australia

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/volkmarsins>



First of all, first things first. I am not going to be comparing this "proper" album with its self-released predecessor, Overture Macabre (which was a pretty decent release in its own right), as though they share songs, this album's longer length and much clearer production puts it in another ball park entirely.

Imagine, if you will, a more metal version of classic Bauhaus. Bypass the Moon-spells and Type O's while you are it. In essence, this outfit channels the spirit of 80's goth rock (with a hint of cold wave) into 90's metal (no sub-genres such as black or death need apply).

The opener "Eyes Sewn Shut" is one of the band's strongest tunes to date, combining nice thick riffage with great (and nostalgia inducing) songwriting that makes you want to bang your head in a rather morbid fashion. The vocalist (and the production) has improved, providing a throatier baritone to go with the industrial gothic metal instrumentation. The title track wastes no time in showing the band's other more 80's influenced allegiance, keeping it interesting and highly addictive all the way.

Most of the songs keep the pace good, and the sound testosterone based. "Interlude in Hell" breaks the flow with a short and suitably dark piece leading to more Sisters of Mercy playing metal via "White Heaven". "The Burning" is my favorite track on the album, being highly catchy without relying on the tried formula, having no crunchy guitars yet still managing to be a charged song with nice lyrics. Its dark and mid paced with clear synths but sounds nothing like typical darkwave fare. And it segues nicely into "Obsessed". Awesome !

The band's sense of dynamics is strong, and takes only the enjoyable bits of stalwarts like Sisters of Mercy and Bauhaus, leaving behind the doodling. The muscularity of the band's sound changes it from moping sounding to positively threatening in places. The synths never take top priority and neither do the samples, only enhancing the claustrophobic dark atmosphere created by these morose Australians.

This is steadily developing into one of my favorite new gothic metal bands (and one of the few who justify the tag). Let us observe and see where their dark path leads to from here.

Suleiman

ZWEIZZ

The Yawn Of The New Age

Release: 2007

Label: [Vendius Records](#)

Avantgenre: Noise Fragmentation Weirdness

Duration: Less Than An Hour

Origin: Norway

Official site: <http://www.myspace.com/zweizzmusic>



(a fragment)

and so it was, about a year or two ago, that the aVoid and the Lignano heard this crazy-ass electronoise album from this guy who was in that cool band and in that other almost cooler but in another way band for a shorter while, and now has a lot of bands everywhere that I don't think anyone can keep track of not even his mother, and thought "hey, let's co-write a review as crazy-ass as this album!", and some work began. and yeah, it was pretty weird. but as things go, it poured out in the sand as Swedes say. too bad, could've become something. maybe. anyway, we forgot about it, until recently, so I thought I'd go resuscitate the few shards of a review that are still to be found on my hard-drive. can't tell what is mine and what is his. but ahh...

again, this is not a review. it could have been. consider it a sketch, a few short impressions. then you ask, why publish it if it's not finished? well, then I ask, why release 'the Frostland Tapes'? one for the completionists, as we revel in self-augmentation. the cat mentioned is now 20 months old and prefers Peter Gabriel and Sting as every grown-up feline does, though she still kinda fancies tuna. the dog is, as far as you are concerned, still not owned by anyone.

disclaimer: aVoid has not listened to this album for a year and can't even remember if it's any good or not.

disclaimer 2: the images found on aVoid's harddrive have been mashed into the text in a hyper-arbitrary fashion, adding some extra un-provoked "strangeness", which is "fun", for the sake of your "entertainment".

enjoy. or don't. -----

**SPAWN OF THE DUDE
GAUGE**

**DAWN OF THE NUDE
MAGE**

**FAUN OF THE CRUDE
WAGE**

**LAWN OF THE FOOD
RAGE**

**SHAWM OF THE
LEWD PAGE**



FLAMINGO BEAT NECRO

("Anyway, I used to hate Iggy Pop but now that he's so commercial I like him a lot better than-"

The ax hits him mid-sentence, straight in the face, its thick blade chopping sideways into his open mouth, shutting him up.)



Svein-Egil Hatlevik. Hologram Magic Logic. Mr. Dingy Sweet Talker Woman Stalker.

DÃ¶rdhjeimsgÃ¶rd, FIÃ¶retÃ¶ and Afrodisiack. Glitchin' & cuttin' it up. My kitten dig this. And... and she's named after a Tormentor song. She claws and attacks the right speaker during track VIII et XI. Normally she prefers old-school black/thrash metal and tuna, but I guess this has the same aesthetic value in the eyes of a 4 month young feline. She says: "54 76iooooooooooo," and what else can you say?

My dog does not dig this. A soon as track I starts I realise that I don't have a dog.

Trippety-hop in epileptic seizures! More than a hobby.

The only difference between 'noise' and 'sound' is the amount of letters used. See, no difference. See no difference.

de nifference Zoo

("That's a very fine Chardonnay you're drinking. /.../ I want to clean you vagina." -I'm wearing a tuxedo for no apparent reason- "It's a beautiful animal")

If my foobar2000 were a needle, it would be called foobar2001.

"RaevskjÃ¶rt" means either 1a.) "Humped in the butt" or 3ce.) "Driven by a fox". I'm... not sure. (I... am... the... devil... and I am... just... like... you)

"Tusch", Substantiv, maskulinum, Standardwortschatz (18. Jhd.): Entlehnung. Ãœbernommen aus Ã¶sterreich, wo dieses Wort "Schlag, LÃ¶rm, Trompeten- und Paukenschall" bedeutet. Letztlich liegt franzÃ¶sisch. touch, altfranzÃ¶sisch. toche "geblasenes Signal, Trompetenzeichen" zugrunde, zu altfranzÃ¶sisch. tochie "berÃ¼hren", auch "ein Tonwerkzeug spielen, blasen".

("Shar-pe?" akthent on thee latht thyllable)

Zweizz-mathematics:

the + yawn + of + the + new + age = theyawnofthenewage = anegateheftyhenwow = album song 1 + song 2 + song x = album y

$$\text{Zweizz}\hat{A}^2 = \text{Zweizz} \times \text{Zweizz} = \text{Zweixzz}$$

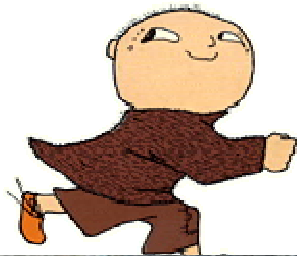
suddenly, horns start growing from your head. or maybe not horns, tentacles perhaps?
things. nasty things. that. should. not. be. there. in the first place. suggestive blood and a
flurry of... butterflies. from TIBETANSKA PLATĀ...ER UTAN NAMN.
KLA AX! VIIRTR! NEIEKN_i; RAOVĀ.... RAOVĀ.... RAOVĀ.... RAICVĀ....
and an old videogame. 256 colours, at least.
Ā...Ā...Ā...ĭ ½ "ĭ ½ "ĭ ½ "Ā-Ā-Ā-Ā'Ā'



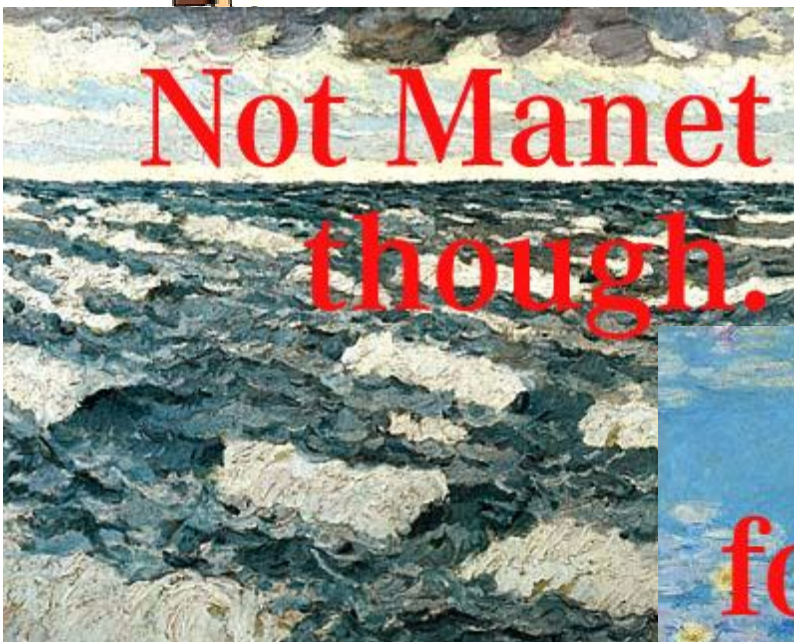
unfold the layers of the new age Yawn, press it 2" thick, and throw it into space... now you can easily reach Jupiter and get stuck in the Lagrange point on your way back, without turning around. they are that many. and deep.

666ANTI-MUSICK for A DIFFERENT AGE no-one has SEEN or is capable of BELIEVING
IN666

yet



(After finishing a second glass of champagne I move to martinis and after I've calmed down sufficiently I take a closer look around the room, *but the midgets are still there*. "Too much red," I mutter to myself.
"Why doesn't she put on some Talking Heads for Christ sakes", I complain bitterly.)



Surrounded by blasphemous winds
Midnight passing and the moon is fulfilled
Slowly blackening the sky
I summon up where the ravens fly high
Towards the moons of Blashyrkh

Death rides on black winds
Evil enter the sky
Angels falls from the heavens
While the darkness shines through
Chariots of the darkest masters arrives on devil wings
Heavens angels surrounded by frost
Forced into the holocaust frozen clouds

A twisted wind rapes the clouds
Memories of cold days and lightning returns

A foggy fullmoon night
Into darkness ride
Under the horned goatmoon
As dark as black rivers at wintertime
Horned Decembermoon come to me
I ride the wings of Torment
Blacker than darkness

appendix #2

two slightly more realistic, though perhaps not more nor less fair, reviews:
<http://www.metal-archives.com/review.php?id=144787>

somewhat written by

Lignano

&

aVoid



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