



Enter with complete confidence the realm of mythology, legend, history... sacred mountain of immortal Zalmoxis... mystery, imagination, supremacy of phantasm, revelation, knowledge, magic... perhaps spring of inspiration... The Past? The Future?... intricate to be defined... The present is now... and here within... Step into the world of underground... to rise above new heights of creative vision, forgive yourselves and recapture your inherent desire...

no: 8'03

AGALLOCH
CODE666
DIVERCIA
GOD

KARMAKOSMETIX
MONUMENTUM
NEGURA BUNGET
THE END
VOKODLOK
PENITENT
WINDS
300 REVIEWS

"Thou art a Man / God is no more / Thy own humanity / Learn to adore For that is my / Spirit of Life / Awake arise to Spiritual Strife" William Blake.



(code014) (Handmade Digipak-CD)

A Traditional Initiation Unto
The Transilvanian Mystery.

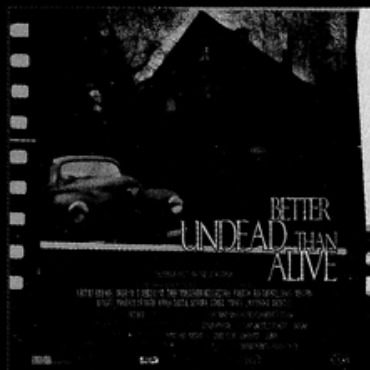
ABORYM
With No Human Intervention



(code015) (Digipak-CD)

the third album from the Necrocult,
An Unlimited Sonic, Chaos, Gnosticism... Featuring Bard "Faust" Eithum (Emperor/Dissection), Natefrost (Carpathian Forest), Irrumator (Anaal Nathrakh) and the Legendary Attila Csihar as Necro Shamanic-vocalist, this is the Dawn of Chaos.

BETTER
UNDEAD THAN
ALIVE



(code016) (Double-CD)

The first code666 Official Soundtrack with Unreleased tracks from our bands: Aborym, Manes, Rakoth, Negura Bunget, Void of Silence, Thee Maldoror Kollektive, Ephel Duath, Unmoored, atrox, Enid, Bloodshed, Diabolum, Handful of Hate, Aghora... a Double-CD set with a cd-r including exclusive Video, Photos, unreleased mp3, special remixes and a secret Game inside...

Sempre Disponibili: code003 - AGHORA - "Aghora" / code004 - RAKOTH - "Jabberworks" / code005 - DIABOLICUM - "The Dark Blood Rising" / code006 - BLOODSHED - "Skullcrusher" / code007 - ABORTUS - "Process of Elimination" / code009 - ENID - "Seelenspiegel" / code010 - VOID OF SILENCE - "Criteria of 666" / code011 - BLOODSHED - "Inhabitants of Dis" / code012 - THEE MALDOROR KOLLEKTIVE - "New Era Viral Order" / code013 - NORDVARGR - "Awaken"



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Blessings!

Well, well...perhaps there are some natural stories to be pointed out so that all more or less technical issues break open...an undersized feedback for paper media, particular personal priorities... bla, bla... But, in the end, I must confess I only needed one single signal to open my appetite for releasing a new "Kogaionon" issue! And... all happened in the light of my struggling adjustment to cope with the idea that a new issue belongs to the remote future... a far-far off frame of my intentional inner measurement. Moreover, until the 8th of October 2002 I was pretty convinced of the idea that my magazine plainly and definitely embraced a webzine facet since every single bit of reality orientated towards a certain segment of commodity: Internet. And here they are my lazy Internet readers (of a comfort I myself easily accepted) and perhaps, one of these days (who can really tell the precise one?) somebody or something might have impelled and urged me to come to better senses such as printing a new issue! Paradoxically, in the very instant I opened Roy Kristeneser's letter... the raw smell of printed paper awoke memories, nostalgias... unique exquisite emotion I once had the strength to experience but of which I kept refusing accepting as true any further... today or for this third millennium! Well, it might as well be true and future shall tell if I was wrong or not!

Yet it was real that my hands held a new issue of "Imhotep" and... while taking a deep breath of autumn mirage and smelling of faded dry leaves of the outside universe... all of a sudden I realized that, in opposition with autumnal perception, my inner secret life hasn't faded away... not yet, not for the time being as time has come indeed for my magazine to be the very first priority! Therefore, during one week only, I selected almost the entire material it was meant to be enclosed... and then, during another two whole weeks I wrote some texts and, of course, the translation followed (thanks, Mihaela!)... so that you finally have the proof of all these right in your hands!

Featuring a different design, I'd say as well a new facet (created and performed by Dan/www.encoil.ro) "Kogaionon" returns into your life and all interested persons may enjoy this final fresh edition! I do hope you'll take pleasure in and the benefit of this issue and may your interest and attention be completely rewarded!

This very issue is exclusively dedicated to some of you who are endeavoured collectors of Metal publications and, of course, to those who are devoted and still "in love" with "Kogaionon" of whom I sincerely expect and pretend not to have become much too aged or.

As far as new readers are regarded, if they actually examine these pages, I solely suggest you to be as critical as you may be... do your best in finding all major imperfections and prove yourselves you can make it even a thousand times better than I did! This is the only manner and chance for us to preserve and keep on going "alive" with this very fragment rather conceived and devoted to the nostalgic ones... to all who might consider themselves "limited to future's reality"! I had enough of standard magazines, common questions and those highly recommended opinions when it is about an album presentation or a band awarding... I had a weird feeling of getting distanced from my age of adolescence, my secret oasis... like if I really missed that captivating emotion set free from all well known comments, from all surrounding me: "Is there a chance for him to get mature someday?"

Probably... next life... should be the answer, he, he!

OK, let's see what you can find here...

For the beginning I must warn you... all interviewed bands were subjectively chosen, while the reviews followed a more realistic and concrete shape so that, in the end, the whole magazine's contour preserved a mature in cold blood debate (excepting perhaps my questions for WINDS of which I definitely have not a single regret since the album is quite an exquisite jewellery), with extremely few idolisations and superlatives, in lack of trendy appreciations as my criteria of labelling were exclusively originality and performance!

In other words, just make sure you want for this underground edition to exist any further and try to get hold of any kind of such publications, no matter the country they come from but in a language you can understand! Otherwise, someday, we might find ourselves sad, bored, buried in a cold routine and having more than enough of such sick frame of mind regarding today's Metal Scene... and we shall be fewer, weaker and more superficial than ever before!

The truth is that resources of revival... of reinforcement or any other impulses... are no more left, unfortunately!

I do express my gratitude for music and send my complete appreciation to all who create or financially uphold music yet I do not forget about all who had, still have and shall have faith in Kogaionon's mission!

I want you to have an exquisite journey inside this realm and may we all meet together somewhere within a Metal printed page!

Stay Dark,

Doru

The 5th of November 2002



since 1995

kogaionon

no: 8 2003

AGALLOCH

Interview



Hi, John and nice to "meet" again! Tell me which are the autumn colours these days in Portland/Oregon? Don't you feel that Fall, nature passing away, has a different supremacy upon us?

Haughm: "Well we've had a bit of an 'Indian summer' but that is finally starting to turn into very cold, grey days and long nights. It's cold enough to wear winter clothes so I'm content enough with that while I await the snow..."

AGALLOCH was given birth in Montana, Missoula to be more precise...which is David Lynch' place of birth as well. Tell me, how is it down there? A possible "Twin Peaks"? Which might be the difference between the two places you stayed at so far?

Haughm: "Montana is a very beautiful state. Half of it is all forests and mountains, the other half is spacious plains. It is the 4th largest state in the US yet there aren't any big cities in it. There are actually more people here in the Portland area than there is in the entire state of Montana. So it is very easy to be completely alone there and the mentality there is quite free and wild. The Twin Peaks series was mostly filmed in and around Snoqualmie, Washington (hometown of Windham Hell). I've been to Snoqualmie several times and it, of course, has the exact same atmosphere as many Lynch films do."

Daniel Breyer is your partner in this project, from the very beginning, but, curiously, he doesn't feature on this last album. What happened? Is he a constituent yet not participating at the compositions? Quite strange, I'd say...or perhaps this is a very polite manner to actually put the "farewell" on the air outside AGALLOCH' field?

Haughm: "Daniel is still with us. He is just on a sabbatical of sorts since he is extremely busy going to school in New York City. He will likely participate on a future release. Whether it be on an EP or a full-length album release remains to be seen."

AGALLOCH music has deep roots inside familiar issues as for Nordic Black bands melting with riffs of Swedish Doom/Death Metal as well as with Folk Ambient Dark Apocalyptic. Should I understand you were fascinated and caught by the same trend of 10 years ago? What is it that you still listen to from old times? Do you see differently now that Norwegian Black Metal movement (and I refer to firing, crimes, and suicides)?

Haughm: "10 years ago I was more interested in death metal; especially bands like Entombed, Morbid Angel, Xysma, Carcass, Amorphis, Sentenced, as well as other stuff like Voivod, In The Nursery, Coil, Christian Death, Cocteau Twins, etc. I did listen to Bathory, Beherit, Master's Hammer, Blasphemy, Darkthrone and I knew about the Norwegian scene from reading fanzines and from underground correspondences. But, it was difficult to get a handle on the 'whole story' since I was living in Montana, far away from Norway, you know. I didn't find out about Euronymous' death until around Dec '93. I got more heavily into black metal and the Norse bands in '94 when I met Breyer. Nowadays, I think the glory days of black metal are long gone and I have very little interest in the new wave of bands coming from there or anywhere else for that matter. But, I do still listen to the classics like Ulver, Darkthrone, In The Woods..., Burzum, Bathory, Forgotten Woods, Satyricon, Dissection, and so on."

Once you moved in Oregon, you met Don Anderson and this was the premise for your demo release, "From Which Of This Oak". I haven't had any chance to listen to it; do you think I have lost a lot? How does it sound? Hello Anderson...

Anderson: "I don't think the sound is all that bad at all. The compositions are very good for the most part,

although the performance may leave something to be desired. I was only available for the solos, which I improvised during recording."

The band has completed later on when you assimilated your friend Jason W. Walton. Do you think it is a filled formula?

Haughm: "Yes of course. We needed a bassist, he liked our first demo, and has been a friend of mine since '92. So to ask him to join was a logical decision."

If we take a deeper more accurate look, AGALLOCH's beginning happened in the same time when AEOLACHRYMAE project practically passed away. Moreover, right about that time, two other new bands started to activate: SUSURRUS INANIS and NOTHING. What can you tell me about these bands? Give me as many details as you can.

Haughm: "Susurrus Inanis is Breyer's project. It is primarily synth-based with dark vocals. It is very similar to the material he has contributed to Agalloch. Nothing is J. William W.'s project and it is purely experimental. Some of his stuff sounds like Autechre and Merzbow, and some of it sounds like Lycia."

SCULPTURED is the other band of Don Anderson. I really wonder how does the knotty Metal get along with the experimental and full of mysticism one?

Anderson: "We all get along in Agalloch as well as we do in Sculptured. Its pretty much the same three guys, except for Brian who does vocals for Sculptured. The only real difference is Sculptured has yet to evolve into the collaborative effort Agalloch now is. I don't ever see Sculptured becoming collaborative in the future. I think this is also because I play all the guitars in Sculptured, so there is very little room for another musician to add ideas. However, in Agalloch, both John and I play guitar so it's much easier to go back and forth with ideas. The two bands are very different, but the simple answer is, I write all the music for Sculptured, and John is pretty much the visionary behind Agalloch. Also, while John is into a lot of the same experimental stuff that I am, I don't think he would go as far as I do with it in Sculptured."

Back to AGALLOCH, passing over "Pale Folklore". "She Painted Fire Across the Skyline" is a masterpiece which often reminds me of old SADNESS. What is your favourite track? How did this album sell at that time, almost three years ago?

Haughm: "My favourite track from that album is 'Hallways Of Enchanted Ebony'. I also like 'Dead Winter Days' quite a lot. I'm not too sure how many exactly it sold, a few thousand copies I guess."



AGALLOCH
THE MANTLE

Why did you have to wait three long years to release another album? There are bands with one album per year. I could find some reasons like perhaps lack of inspiration, commodity or lots of other business or troubles keeping you away...but I am curious to find out from you what really happened so that you delayed so much. I had information you actually faced some problems at the recording part, last year...but isn't it too much time?

Haughm: "I don't know why we consistently get asked this question. I would much rather spend three years on a truly great album than spit out a mediocre effort every year. I don't think spending as much time as necessary is neither a bad nor strange thing. Scholomance spent three years between albums, Katatonia spent three years between their first two, Arcturus spent five years on their latest album...and on and on. I think bands should spend at least 2 years between full-length releases, if not more. It might decrease the inane pile of poor quality releases every year..."

The new tracks reach a very-very different side...the experimental one. On "Pale Folklore", the epic dimension outlined a specific Dark Folk Metal...well, for the new album, the very basis is built on Ambient atmosphere where acoustic interludes and some "ruins" of Folk, Ethereal simply dissolve into each other. Are you SWANS fans? Perhaps it sounds strange, but AGALLOCH reminds me of this band...

Anderson: "I am flattered that we remind you of SWANS. I have to say that SWANS is one of the most important bands in my life. I think they are absolutely brilliant and one of the most prolific bands to ever grace this Earth. When I saw a solo performance by Michael Gira, I gave him a copy of 'The Mantle'. When I handed it to him I told him how much of an influence SWANS has been on all of us. He was very nice and seemed flattered. However, I doubt he would be into it. He seems to be more into American roots and folk music now."

Your music's message is a very introverted one; I'd say a grave bleak one, based on white/black contrast, but full of grey or silvery hues. Maybe my subconsciousness got the picture right from the booklet realm... but it couldn't be only that...

Haughm: "Well naturally the imagery can guide a person's perception about the music. That is what we use it for. The music on 'The Mantle' has more of a 'damp, lonely, cold, stoney, and overcast' sort of feel to it so I felt it necessary to compliment this feeling with images which were suitable for such an atmosphere. Much was the same with 'Pale Folklore' and I think the aesthetic result was a success on both albums. Our expression is very multi-elemental. That is to say the music, the imagery, the lyrics, and the production all feeds off each other and makes a complete whole."

Anderson: "I like to think that despite all the depression, some glimmer of hope shines through...some shade of humanity. I don't think we've lost our humanity. That is the most important thing I think."

The instrumental tracks are in a good company with the Metallic ones so that the result is a magnificent one...mysterious, pessimistic and the depressive atmosphere might be exactly the key element of this Dark sound. What does make you feel that way? What is your inspiration? Deceptions, solitude, uselessness, sadness, relinquishment of life...aren't these terms a little too depressing for an AGALLOCH listener? I might even say that your music elegantly communicates with suicide...

Haughm: "Our first album dealt more with suicidal themes as I was more often in that state of mind while creating it. 'The Mantle' is different. It is an expression

of being in a state of longing for something that will likely never come. Finding comfort in this bleak world while watching glimmers of hope pass by; knowing they are fleeting. I guess this is my state of mind nowadays. I don't see suicide as a very intelligent option these days. I feel that this life is the only one we get so make the best of it while you can. Despite the overall darkness and despair life has to offer, there are always small positive things to look forward to."

You use a lot of traditional instruments like accordion, mandolin, trombone, contrabass... what was your intention, in fact? Is there any connection with your lands or any musical regionalism?
Anderson: "No. I don't think using traditional instruments was at all an extension of our roots as Americans. We just wanted to expand our sound."

Curiously or not, your tracks can be totally instrumental and quite the opposite as well... Music creates for the listener a confusing state of mind while voices seem to be even more baffling. Like being a soundtrack of motion picture. What do you think?

Haughm: "Hmmm.... we feel that vocals should never be overused. Vocals are just another instrument and if the song does not need them, then we will not use them."

I can also hear a Spanish talking... sounds tragic like if captured from a movie sequence. Can you land me a few details? Could it be any association with Jodorowsky?

Anderson: "Jodorowsky is one of our favorite directors. The sample is from his first film 'Fando & Lis', which was released in American on DVD by the excellent folks at Fantoma Video."

You are very fond on another art: cinema... Ingmar Bergman or David Lynch are very well quoted and talented film directors... would you find attracting to compose music for them? "Odal" or "The Hawthorne Passage" might be more than just appropriate for such...

Haughm: "It would be quite an honour if, for example, David Lynch or Jim Jarmusch approached us for a soundtrack contribution. I can't imagine any of our current material being of much interest and we'd rather make something exclusive anyway. Of course, if Mr Lynch wished to use Agalloch's music in the same way Powermad was used in 'Wild At Heart', I would have to decline."

Anderson: "I would hate to intrude on Angelo Badalamenti. Lynch and Badalamenti are perfect together."

The Mantle: it's a metaphor for the Earth nature, or a greater sort of entity, that we cannot control, comprehend or fully embrace. This is a very beautiful characterisation for your album and its title! Do you sympathise with Greenpeace Foundation? Can you say that respecting nature means to worship Her?

Haughm: "No, I don't think one needs to be some fanatical environmentalist to embrace nature. Half the time, I question whose side those people are on! I think people just need to use common sense and quit being so selfish and ignorant. We are not the most important lifeforms on this planet. Fools can believe what they want. The fact is, mankind cannot exist without maintaining balance in nature."

One other curiosity of mine, which is the significance of the deer you put on the cover...any connection with your music?

Haughm: "On 'Pale Folklore' I thought the deer skull in JWW's photo would add to the forest/winter element in a creepy, grim sort of way. For 'Of Stone, Wind, and Pillor' I chose one of my favorite Gustave Dore etchings which happened to be a stag drinking from a stream. For 'The Mantle', I chose my favorite statue/fountain in Portland which happened to be an elk."

What was the feedback for this new album? I've read here and there that it was considered a little too long or somehow boring and even without dynamic....

Haughm: "The press has been, for the most part, excellent. There are always going to be some negative reviews but that is to be expected. The reaction from fans has been quite divided. People seem to either completely love it or utterly hate it. However, I prefer this kind of strong reaction because it shows that



people are at least passionate about their feelings towards this album either way."

I didn't mention about your MCD. Sol Invictus is one of your soul-bands thus you featured a cover version. What was the purpose of this MCD? I ask you since it seems not to have any connection with none of your albums... It simply seems to be experimental and this is all... am I wrong?

Haughm: "The primary purpose of the MCD was to officially release the material from '98 which originally was going to be a 7" EP. We also had the Sol Invictus cover which was recorded for the 'Sol Lucet Omnibus - Sol Invictus Tribute' double CD. Breyer had also recorded a new piece. It would seem that it would be a bit cluttered but the MCD actually came together in a nice, cohesive package and ended up bridging the gap between our two full-lengths. There are two songs with vocals and three instrumentals."

What about your free time? Are you married? I know you travelled and visited some European Nordic countries...

Haughm: "My free time is usually devoted to my creativity or other interests and passions. No, I'm not married and I have no desire to be. I visited Finland in 1999 and was quite taken by it. It is a wonderful country with a marvellous culture, which I enjoyed very much."

I listen again to "Odal" and some frames remind me as well of THE CURE...what can you say?

Haughm: "Yes, it is undeniable that they are an influence. I'm quite partial to The Cure's mid-period releases, particularly 'Disintegration'."

Anderson: "I love The Cure."

I understood you are an anti-Bush fan! Where from such rejection? Don't you approve his expansionist politics? In music realm... a form of protest is quite very vehement, Grind/Crust core... Should we expect an AGALLOCH version for protest?

Haughm: "Agalloch isn't an outright political band



and even if we were, we don't believe in conforming to someone else's form of protest. George W. Bush should never have been elected as president and continues to prove this sentiment every day. I knew from the day he was sworn in that this was going to be a long four years (perhaps eight if he can steal another election - and you know he'll try). His war on Iraq is a fucking joke! It has nothing to do with 'homeland security'. It is for control over foreign oil and a continuance of political domination over a region which has been harassed and demonized by the western world for decades. Frankly, I think America is a much bigger threat to the civilized world than Iraq is!"

Anderson: "It is pretty well known in America that Bush's family has a long history of crime, drugs and other such problems. I think he is a war hungry fool trying to outdo his daddy. This man does not represent us."

Well, a full year passed since the terrorist attacks on 11 September... what is America's state... and what is the Americans' state of mind?

Anderson: "The most ridiculous thing about the aftermath was the academic blacklisting that occurred in universities where professors attempted to 'enlighten' their classes about America's own terrorism against other countries. People like Noam Chomsky have become demonized as unpatriotic because they are critical of America. This is just plain wrong. If America continues on this path of extreme patriotism whilst supporting a president who talks about 'the homeland' all the time and wants to 'help' out other countries, the more America will look like Germany in the 1940s. I am opposed to the Americanization of any country. I value the America that Jack Kerouac wrote about, or that Charles Ives wrote music about, or that Jim Jarmusch makes films about. That is America. Bush IS NOT AMERICA."

Haughm: "People have become noticeably more political and angry. At first there was a lot of blind patriotism; many US flags flying high everywhere, a demonization of any country or culture who wasn't 'on our side', and many other forms of belligerent American behavior. Now, over a year later, it has progressed a bit. Yes, the blind patriotism is still there. Yes, the jackasses still fly their tattered and torn US flags from their gas-sucking SUVs they can't live without. However, people are becoming increasingly skeptical towards the Bush regime, which is especially noticeable in Portland. I have no doubt that more terrorist attacks will happen in the US and I think our government knows this and wants this - it gives more excuses to attack other countries and focus on changing their governments while 'the homeland' continues to rot from the inside. I think if America would mind its own damn business, we wouldn't have these problems with terrorism to begin with. But no, America has to be the hero, the big brother, the big capitalist asshole who has to get involved with everyone else's conflict; especially if it involves the interests of our big businesses. 9/11 was a terrible, terrible event but I think it was, overall, a very good wake up call for America. People here had become so callous towards problems abroad and never thought that something like that would ever happen to us. Well it did... will America learn from it or will America continue its arrogant, narrow view of the rest of the world...?"

I guess this should be close to enough... my friend. As far as I could predict, perhaps in 2005 might appear a new album. From this moment... how would you picture your future material?

Haughm: "Our next full-length will most likely be released in mid 2004. In the meantime, we have a couple 7"s and another MCD planned. Our 7" releases will be more of a pure neo-folk style and the MCD will be a conceptual expressionistic piece. Our next album will likely follow an even more 'dark experimental rock' style than 'The Mantle' but it is too early to say for sure."

I do appreciate for your time and for approving sharing with me so many fascinating things. Best luck! There is one single question: where from does this name, AGALLOCH, comes?

Haughm: "Agalloch or Agallochum is a form of resinous wood that gives an aromatic smoke when burned. Thanks for the interview..."

November, 2002

CODE666 RECORDS

Interview



Emiliano Lanzoni was one of the first contacts I had since 1995! We talked about his activities in the first issue of „Kogaionon” magazine, after the release of the great Italian NIHILI LOCUS’ debut MCD, at Emi’s label, Boundless Records. Now, we can bring into discussion Code666, a label with an exceptionally intense activity in Metal underground.

Hi Emi. Let’s start this interview in the same manner as the 99,9% of interviews we actually are used to read today. So, it seems A.C. Milan is the best team after three rounds in Champions League. When could we see on the Rivaldo’s shirt a banner with Code666, he, he? Probably when Shevchenko will be Rakoth’ fan and Nesta an Aghora’s one... Good start for your favourite football team, am I right?

”You’re damn right, Doru! I’ve been in Munich’s ‘Olympiastadion’ last Tuesday to attend the match as usual, and I was delighted by the performance! We are now leading our sub-league; hopefully we’ll go ahead! It’s nice to see again AC Milan among the very best in Europe; we’ve waited 10 years since the mighty Van-Basten-Gullit-Rijkaard trio... This year we have Rivaldo, Shevchenko, Rui Costa, Maldini, Seedorf, Nesta, Redondo, Leonardo and Inzaghi... Not bad either...but still, clubs like Real Madrid and Arsenal are a lot stronger than us... I hope we’ll cover the gap a.s.a.p.... The main goal now in AC Milan is to play a good football instead of looking just for the final result, strange, but it’s almost the same with code666: my aim is to produce quality bands, not necessarily to sell a shitloads of records... I would be happy to sell millions, but it’s not my primary objective, same goes for AC Milan...”

How does the autumn look like in Italy, in Milan? Do you agree with me that this period represents the winter’s prelude?

”I don’t live in Milan, but I love Autumn, it’s really cool to live in the countryside like I do in this period, even if my favourite season is Spring, girls starts to undress, people starts to go outside and have fun, and principally there are the most important football match of the season...”

Miskatonic University is an unknown name for me (just as its history, if I recall the days of ’95) but for you represents more than a simple band. What can you tell me about Emi’s actual voice? Is it possible to see the Code666’ boss as a singer in a band, maybe? How can you describe today the history/saga of your band?

”Hehehe... Miskatonic University (nickname Miska) was my band since 1992, it was just before learning that I prefer to be have a label and do A&R instead of

touring all over Europe in a shitty van sleeping in shitty places and eating shit... But I loved my band and I loved that life-style... Now I’m older and the ‘sex-drugs and rock’ n’ roll’ is not for me anymore... I’ve been asked several times to sing in other bands (including code666 bands) but I’ve always refused, I’m not such a great singer, and it would be embarrassing for me to perform in a code666-album... Also, Miska was a hardcore band, much more punk-related than metal, so would be really too far from what I’m doing now with code666. Those 10 years are a great source of information for my actual job: being an underground frustrated musician for so long taught me how to deal with underground frustrated bands, and taught me to understand better their problems, their needs and their requests, in fact I think that the best quality of my label is the excellent

1992 I started my band (Miska) and we decided to self produce us in order to keep control on our music... That’s how Boundless Records was born, without knowing a shit about the music business, it was like a school for me learning everything, practising every day and becoming the label-manager I am now... After a while we decided to start producing also other bands besides Miska, so I signed Nihili Locus and Hybris, and my partner signed Brain Boozers and Out of Order... It was hard because we had no money, no experience and no idea of how manage a label, but again, it was an extremely useful period for me... Now with code666 I’ve learnt from my old mistakes and at least I’m avoiding to do them again.”

Money, money, money... is the drug without which we cannot survive in this materialistic life. Is Emi a

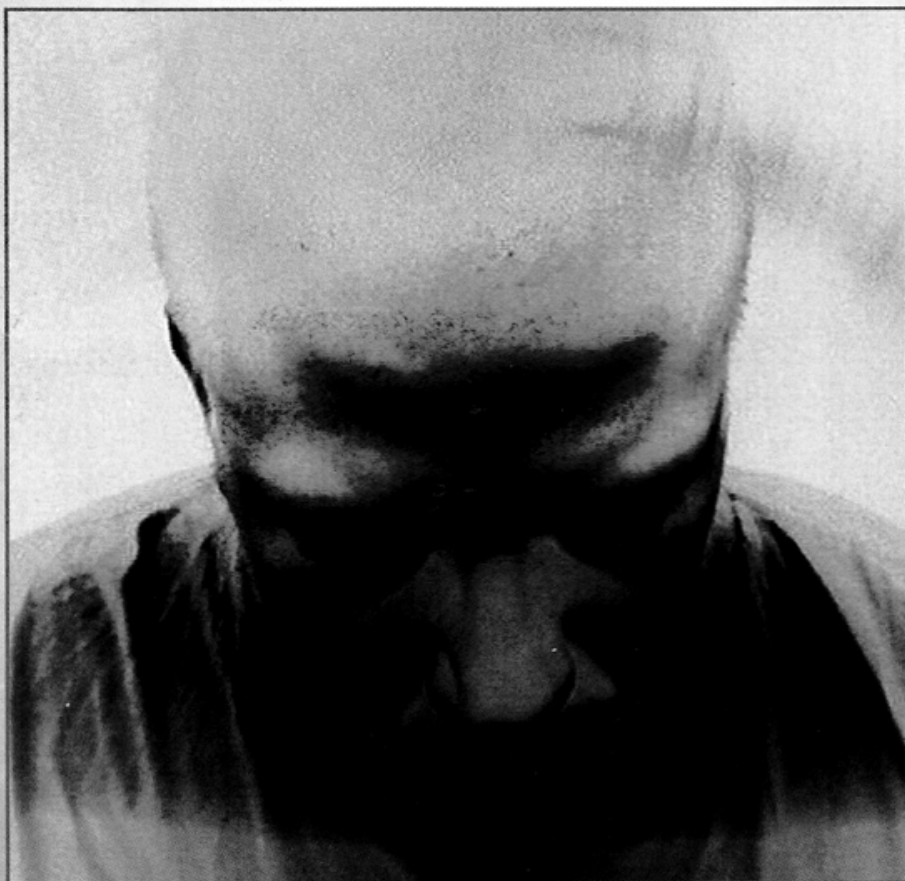
satisfied businessperson? Is it hard to keep alive a label in Italy? Is it different as in other country, maybe?

”It’s damn hard. And I’m not a satisfied businessperson at all... In fact I can’t live with code666... Maybe it’s strange to believe from the outside, because we have now quite a good reputation as a quality-label, we’ve done 12-13 albums and we managed to sell more than 40.000 copies of the entire catalogue, but still I’m forced to do side-jobs to survive: as soon as I have spare time, I call a temporary jobcentre and I do a couple of days in a factory, in a office or wherever... It’s good that it’s so easy and quick to find those jobs nowadays, otherwise I would be forced to use some of the code666 money to pay my personal bills and I don’t want this: I prefer to reinvest 100% of the earning in code666, we still need to grow a lot and it’s ok for me to do some sacrifice now for a better tomorrow.”

Code666 (subtitle: underground culture for

undeads) is a strange name. You started as a Xeroxed’zine in 1999 and now you have a respectable label. Why did you choose for this name? You are an atheist but the label’s designation seems to be a Satanist one, am I wrong?

”Yes, I’m atheist, and no, code666 is not a satanic label (and zine before). Code666 is the title of my favourite movie, a very rare independent Mexican movie (shot in 1978) that I adore, imagine a mix of ‘Lost Highway’, ‘The Holy Mountain’ and Frank Miller’s ‘Sin City’... This movie represents me at 100% so it’s a perfect name for my label. I decided to start a Xeroxed zine after leaving Boundless Records just to put some shit out of me (it was a damn bad period for me personally), the zine turned out quite good and got a



relationship we have with all our bands.”

Could you share with me a few fragments from your musical activity connotation, started as a tape-trader in 1985? But what about Boundless Records...? What happened between our first interview we made and nowadays? Hybris, Nihili Locus... You had 5 bands under your banner...

”Well, I’ve started like everybody I think: loving metal music during the eighties was not very easy, especially in a small town in Italy, with no metal shop, no metal magazines, no metal bands or radio, so I’ve started trading (bad) dubbed tapes with my pen pals around the world, using the old-school way: handwritten letters, Xeroxed flyers and unbounded passion... In

great success, so I decided to transform it in a record-label and re-start my old passion, and that's it."

RAKOTH was a real success for your label: 7500 copies sold-out and now the Russian guys are under Earache banner. AGHORA is another quality band and actually represents the best-sold album of your label. It seems you "smell" the bands with impact at listeners, am I right?

"Well, I do my best to find original band, and usually if you produce something new and diverse, you get the attention from fans and media... Of course there are several times when the reactions are bad, because people don't understand what the band wants to express, but there are already big labels like Nuclear Blast or Century Media who can release Xeroxed first-class glossy-bands and sell millions, I can't and I don't want to play that league: so I focus myself on weird, strange, special musicians, trying to give them what they need to get out and produce their music in the best way, arranging customized promotion and a customized marketing plan, giving, advises to help them improving..."

Ephel Duath is another quality band and after their "Opera" demo the deal with you was practically a logical reasonable step. "Phormula" has received lots of enthusiastic appraisals, but the result in sales was rather disappointing. Paradox, false image... do you have a coherent explanation for such? You are, in fact their Manager after Giuliano's leaving...

"No explanation, really... 'Phormula' has been our biggest critics success and our worst selling album ever, and it's hard to understand why: it's a groundbreaking album, a lot ahead and really innovative, it has been released 2 years ago and still no one was able to improve it. We get a lot of email from new bands stating Ephel Duath as their major influence, but it seems that the album was appreciated a lot among the musician or the journalists, but not by normal people, maybe it's too ahead, maybe it's just not made to please everyone, maybe it's a shitty album and I'm so dumb that I can't understand it... Now they signed with Earache and I'm their manager, they are right now in studio to record the new album, it will be absolutely supreme, but I fear the same reactions: it's again too avantgarde and too ahead for the market... I mean, if people think that an average band like ...And Oceans is the best 'Avantgarde extreme-metal' band of the scene, then there's no space (and no place) for Ephel Duath."

I would like to find out more details about the bands you have a contract with for the moment.

"Sure: starting in chronological order, my first band has been Rakoth from Russia: I signed them after hearing their shitty-dubbed demo recorded in their garage, they have released 2 excellent albums on code666 ('Planeshift' and 'Jabber' works) before signing with Earache (who re-released on license 'Planeshift'), now they are in studio to finish the 'Tiny Death' new album, can't wait to hear it... Then came Ephel Duath with 'Phormula', and the third band was Aghora. I was lucky enough to find 3 amazing bands to start my label with, both different from each other but still fitting the concept of code666. After the big Aghora success, I've signed 2 Swedish bands: Diabolicum and Bloodshed: both released 2 CDs on code666 until now, and especially Diabolicum has been quite a big success: a lot of bands are inspired now by their 'Dark blood rising' album. Then came Abortus from Australia: I decided to pick them because they are the opposite of the typical 'code666 band', usually 'Avantgarde-sophisticate-weird'... I don't like to sound obvious, and I hate when people think to know my next move. I love to shake the audience and make unexpected choices, Abortus is a raw, old-school grooving brutal thrash band, perfect to shock all the people thinking that code666 is just another cliché label finding the profitable music-style and try to capitalize it without experimenting... Strange to say, but Abortus (our most 'classic heavy metal band')

is our biggest experiment until now... In 2002 we released at the same time 2 great album by Enid from Germany and Void of Silence from Italy, again 2 different bands, and again a good feedback especially from the media: Void of Silence has been hailed as the first 'crossover' band between the ambient-folk-industrial scene and the extreme-doom-black one, while Enid recorded an emotional piece of dream-work. Our last albums, the new Bloodshed and their Maldoror Kollektive, followed our aim to play with the opposites: a classic Swedish-death metal opus by Bloodshed and a cyber-ritual post-metal outfit like Thee Kollektive. Now we are ready to launch Negura Bunget, an amazing band still unknown in most parts of Europe (you know them very well I think-Negura how? I don't know, please scroll these pages and who knows, maybe you'll find enclosed an interview with this Romanian band, he, he-ed!), new Nordvargr, our first code666 compilation, the new Aborym, the new Manes, new Atrox, Aghora, Diabolicum, Unmoored, Handful Of Hate, etc..."

Unholy and Breach are two bands you are interested in.

"Both are among my favourite bands, and both are the only ones not completely out of my range, both sadly split up recently, so I'm trying every day to convince them to reform and restart with code666... I'm also looking for a band that does not exist, or better a band which is still only in my head and I'm looking for: if someone out there is playing a twisted form of black-hardcore with a massive dose of noise-break beats, inhuman vocals and tribal-apocalyptic atmospheres, drop me an email, because, you got a contract with code666!"

Code666 represents four persons and Peppe (web-designer) as guest member. What kind of skills should have an employer of your label? Do you see any possibility I work for you, he, he?

"If you want to work for code666, then you are in! Really! We are desperately trying to find new employers, but nobody seems to be interested or nobody seems to fit the label needs... The main problem is money: no one is paid in code666 (including me)... It's not easy to work just for the glory, but who knows? Maybe someone is as mad as us..."

Code7 is a Management Company. Tell me more details about it.

"Code7 started to organize gigs and do some booking in Italy, but also as a management company to help bands getting a good deal and follow their careers. I'm doing this with Ephel Duath, and I enjoy it a lot, more info at www.code7.it"

Emi, you have the same age as me, 31 old years. Do you have a family, children? How looks a normal day for you?

"Unfortunately I don't have children (I would like to have many, but my girlfriend don't think the same...) So, I have 2 dogs and 2 cats while waiting for her damn 'yes'... My normal day is: Wake up at 11 am, breakfast for me and the animals, then start working on code666 while listening to the mountain of promo we receive every day (usually 99,99999% of them are quite bad, so it's not very enjoyable), then my girlfriend came home for the lunch, I cook for both again and during the afternoon I work again for the label until 19, when my lovely one came back for dinner. I cook again for everybody (cats and dogs included, they pretend to eat what we eat...) And I start working again for code666 until very late, or if I need money to pay my rent or food, I call my job-office and they tell me the address of the factory to work in during the whole night until 8-9 am, and I start again. The exception are the days where there is a football match involving Milan: in that case I leave home very soon to go to San Siro stadium in Milan or I watch the match on TV if it's too far... Quite boring from the outside uh...? (oh, yes, Emi... I understand

you... go back to work!-ed). But I love it!"

What can you tell me about the Italian Metal labels? In our first interview you told me that Italian Metal scene not exist yet... But, what about the entire Metal activity..?

"For many years, Avantgarde has been the only metal label in Italy, and they are still the number one in my eyes, with amazing bands and a great attitude. Then came Scarlet, which is a very fast growing label mainly focused on power-metal or death-thrash. There are also other labels quite interesting like Beyond Productions, Eibon Records and Inch Productions, but still too underground to be noticed outside Italy. The entire metal activity is damn lazy and damn small here, but there are many great Italian bands, too bad that labels are not at the same level."

I saw on your site a division focused only to promote bands, a kind of webzine. It's a challenge for me, really! What do you think is important to find out in an interview? Official questions, official answers, limited subjects...this is the scenario mostly advanced in Metal activity. Are you satisfied with this kind of promotion/commerce?

"Not at all. I think that 90% of the metal press sucks, the interviews are far from being interesting, with pre-made questions and pre-made answers, good reviews are traded with advertising spot and there's not space for true journalism, it's so pathetic and useless... There are some exceptions, and 'Kogaionon' is one of those: your interviews for example are among the best ones, really (Thank you! I appreciate your correct attitude, he, he-ed). When I read an interview I'm not interested in all the usual shit, it's boring to start with the bio, continuing with the new album, asking for the favourite bands and ending with the future plans, always in the same order, always in the same manner, the same questions to cannibal corpse or to a Bulgarian demo-band... Why? I like to know things about the personal life of the bands, about the rehearsal, the studio, about the groupies, the business side (labels, distribution, budgets...) Or about their thoughts on off-topics (like your football question for example, I would die to know the favourite Emperor's football club <AC MILAN, probably-ed> instead of having the damn boring 'track by track' for the 10000 time). It's hard for me to understand why someone prefer to buy that shitty magazines instead of great ones like yours 'Kogaionon', or Ledo Tadas 'Ad Arma' (Tadas, it seems we are the Twin Peaks, ohhh-ed)..."

Emi, I guess it should be enough. Thanks for the interview and good luck in the future. A final question: do you see some important changes in Metal Scene in the last ten years? Which are your believes?

"Yes, it's obvious: Internet. 10 years ago everything was different, now the net changed a lot of things and will continue to change: I think that in another 10 years the metal scene will be something completely different from now: no more labels (hopefully), the bands will sell their music directly online with no pressing-production costs, 90% of the bands will record their songs in their home-studios and the 'battle' will be in the promotion-side of everything: the best you'll promote you, the more you'll sell music, that's why I think that all the labels will be transformed in promo-agencies or something like that... Of course, maybe the major labels will continue to print some CDs (or DVD or whatever new format), but I see no future for a classic underground record-label like code666, at least not in the same shape as now... I don't fear this future at all: I'm not a guy who sits down and watches the world changing: I like to improve, to change, and to grow... The more things change, the more doing my job is a great thing. Btw, I'd like to mention that we completely restyled our website at www.code666.net, so take a look and enjoy our new web-highway."

October, 2002

DIVERCIA

Interview



A new band, a new name on the Gothic Metal Scene... We will see if the future of this band will bring the success!

Hi there and may I found you in a proper state of mind for communication. How do you manage to get along these days?

"Just great. After all our debut album has got lot of attention and we've had few great promo gigs."

Your "Modus Operandi" album was a big surprise for my tastes. I don't know if you recall but you sent me "Forever Autumn" demo MCD three years ago. Honestly, I have no see more changes in the sound... Just the normal voice is more mature and lower... What do you think about evolution of your music in the last three years?

"We've gone through an evolution that has merely changed us as persons and it might not be heard directly from our music. Like you already said the music we produce hasn't changed lot since the early years when our first EP's was recorded and we decided to include some of those songs also to Modus Operandi-album, like As Mist Descends and To Forgive. If you listen to M.O. it is quite hard to hear which one of those songs are the older ones and which ones are the newest ones."

You started as an instrumental team (1994) and you released the first demo, "Descending Mist" (1998). After Jyri was contacted, you released MCD up-mentioned (1999), and the first release on a label, "Planetee" EP on SOUND RIOT, in 2000. A very short discography for a band with such great sound, don't you think? Other bands have already two or three full-albums in the same period of time...

"Like others, we have lots of songs already composed but only few of those have been recorded yet and so that might the explanation to such a short discography. MCD's and EP's are recorded only because we had to have those songs on tape to continue making more songs. Few songs that describes our band and music the most were chosen to be recorded and then we tried to haunt a recording deal and start to gather a full-length album with a financial help of the label. It goes like this in Divercia and I think we've haven't lost anything by having so few records."

HIM, SENTENCED, SONATA ARCTICA, NIGHTWISH are just a few Finnish bands with the same sound as yours. It's a matter of trend, maybe? Have you inspired by them? How would you define your music? Dark Gothic Progressive Melodic Heavy Metal are just a few connections, am I right?

"Yes, the words you already mentioned are much the same as I would have said but the terms to describe our band and music would be something like; fast, melodic dark metal with a bit of progressive touch. But this is only my opinion of it and of course every listener has their own. We've been inspired by lots of different things including those band you mentioned. The list of all bands that have affected to our doings would be easily ten times longer than this but when speaking about the bands that have influenced us the

most the list would be as follows Danzig, Dimmu Borgir, Judas Priest, Katatonia, Dream Theater and Stratovarius."

LOST IN TWILIGHT was the first name for the band. DIVERCIA is a word with more resonance and with impact for the listener. But what means it? Diverse and Diversity in a "divercian" language maybe (he, he)? Why did you change the name?

"The name change was considered over a year and just before signing a new deal we decided that now would be the correct time to do that. There was nothing special deal in name change like pressure from label or any other things related to Hammerheart Records. It



was purely a product of our weird mind flow. Divercia is modified from the English words diverse and diversity but we wanted to have a name that doesn't directly mean anything. The main reason why we ended up to choose the name Divercia was to have a name that describes our music and members better than the former one and I think this is the name for us cause we are quite different between each other and our music is a combination of many different styles and types of music."

I found out rumours that you have received first other offer, before Hammerheart, but they not keep

the word and you also lost some money. It's true? Please, give me a correct explanation...

"We had a deal with a Portuguese label and from the first day we were on a different level with those guys and the last drop was by the time we were recording M.O. and they announced that they were having financial difficulties. We decided to buy the master tape and pay the whole bill and hoped that someone would buy it afterwards. We're glad that all happened like it was planned, cause Hammerheart records was one of the few labels that offered to pay the price of the master and release it under a short period of time without any harm to us. One thing that have to be corrected is that we didn't lose any money after all it was a situation that just can't be recommended to anyone cause selling all your personal property and invest it to a DAT doesn't sound very reasonable..."

"Modus Operandi" is a very strange name and I understood you choose it because you read "Obsession" book... Do you feel fascinated by profilers, by psyches of killers, horror movies/books?

"We sure are interested in everything that swerves from the path of virtue and the book 'Obsession' truly was a piece of work that contained a lot of highly condemnable and distressing things. These were apparently the reasons why we wrote a song and name the whole album by that."

Please try to describe me the lyrics of the tracks... "Transylvanian", hmmm, are you studying the vampires' themes? Transylvania is a region from Romania, not from Finland... So, I don't see the connection... Or is DIVERCIA's concept a European one?

"Actually we don't consider our songs connected that much to a certain region. Jyri would be the correct guy to explain the idea of the lyrics to Transylvanian [love]. I guess it was all about a man who couldn't find a peace of mind until he was dead. After passing away he was woken up by some voodoo spirit and he became a henchman, dressed as a clown (the cover of the album is inspired by this song). That's all I can tell."

Your clean vocals were added with a few growls parts, in the last two tracks. Why? It seems to be a cliché for the most Metal bands today... When will you add female ones?

"Like many other bands, we also wanted to add some growls to our songs. It might be a cliché nowadays but we consider it to be as a contrast to

those clean vocals we're normally having and it is J's way to strength the parts that need to be brought up. In the early years when we were still an instrumental band, we considered to add female vocals to the line up. But since J joined the band, there hasn't been any discussion about that matter. But never say never!"

In my review regarding your album I wrote that DIVERCIA is the reaction to NIGHTWISH but in a male version, what do you think? How would it look like in studio/live Jyri besides Tarja, with the DIVERCIA members? What about NIGHTWISH formula?

"We don't compare us to Nightwish 'cause we are after all quite different between each other. But I must admit that that band like many other great artists has influenced us and we've always wanted to add those similar kinds of feelings to our own songs. Not as a rip off but it is our way to respect those bands."

Please offer me a few details about your members: hobbies, musical preferences...

"We all watch lot of movies and read books. Some of us are studying music in an institution and we try to handle the transportation to gigs by using motorcycles. Like I already mentioned, we are quite different between each other and that stands also when speaking about our music taste. It varies all from Dimmu to RHCP and Katatonia to Helloween, so the rage is quite wide."

The age of all members is around 25 old years. How does the future looks like at this age? Your goals? Dreams? Musical and not only...

"Yes, I'm the youngest one and it ain't the age that bring us down some day 'cause we still 13 years when talking of our minds. Anyway it's hard to estimate the future, but now we are living times when our debut album has been released and we are excited about it. Few brand new song are composed and we're having a great time promoting the M.O., so I think we keep on doing this as long as it feels good..."

DENIGRATE is a Finnish band with perspective, I guess. What can you tell me about the Metal scene? It's an evolution of sort? More and more atmospheric bands... no brutality, only keyboards and rhythms...

"The scene in Finland is quite small but known pretty well abroad I guess. I've faced to many questions why Finnish heavy has such a unique sound and songs have same kind of structures and similarities. This is a question that I just don't have any good or much less a correct answer. One thing that might be a reason to this is our geological position here in far north. Well now you think that I went nuts and started to share bullshit but I still think that living in a country like Finland that is quite isolated from other European countries, the Finnish bands might not have been that influenced by other bands or music than for example bands from Germany or US. So we've been forced... kind of forced to construct our own sound and style that reflects our country and people and so on. The truth is that I hell don't know... Denigrate, fuck yeah! We've had a chance to play with those guys few times and we've had so great time that you just can't describe by using words, U just have to experience it."

Is it a difference of any kind in the sound and the image between DIVERCIA in studio and on the stage?

"Well we've composed our songs so that the sound would be very close as on a record, but there's always some parts that has to be left away. The feeling is the most important thing when performing live and there's always some leads, solos, etc. that rich up and colorize our gigs."

I like the site and the artwork of www.divercia.com. Is it helpful for DIVERCIA to have a site; in which way?

"The site is great and we are really grateful for that to our designer Kristian who've done excellent job taking care of all the artwork we're presenting on our album-cover, shirts, posters and so on. We have had lot of contacts and comments via net and that is the most important thing. Secondly it is quite cheap way to advertise and promote your doings. So the answer is absolutely YES, it really is important to us."

OK. Thanks for the interview and good luck on gigs! Vaya con Diablos, my friend...

"Thanks a lot for this and try to keep the lights on, so it won't get too dark..."

Octavian

Paler has concluded, inside his last book,

"Desert for eternity", that man owns three lives: a public one, a personal one and a "secret" one which I couldn't agree more. In my case, if the public one is pretty known and the personal life belongs exclusively to my family and friends, my "secret" life devours me and reaches almost uncontrollable tides, even for myself. For it is filled with dreams, obsessions and fantasies of my inner soul, with deep roots in my sub consciousness. Far beyond any reasonable doubt, it is my "secret" life that gave birth to this very activity named "Kogaionon" and the most powerful force for keeping it still alive. Why so? Just because, in spite of others' believes and practices, to me music is not and never will be a profession. If I gave music up neither my public life nor the personal one would change or be affected in their essence. Perhaps, on contrary, I would become a more careful father, a candid husband and I probably have a better and more important job as well...all my acquaintances would have the chance to appreciate a more socialized person in me. But I wouldn't know that. Yet when the "secret" life desecrates a destiny (some call it biography) from early childhood till the teen-age period, there is a kind of optimism that makes you think that everything is perfectly reachable at one simple gentle touch... and then you come to have a firm conviction that nothing carry weight while no impediments can really oppose. And so you get through to an age when it's rather appropriate to analyse in extreme terms "what is the most important thing for me? Is the personal life or the secret one?" Hard to make a decision. Even more sombre, I suspect not even my personal private life can range under some decent lines of guidance since responsiveness such love and passion struggle within in order to wreck and dispatch my "secret" life. And here from tolerance makes itself the proper place or should I say it's rather self-control that dominates? Some simply name it COMPROMISE. I couldn't know if such monologue figured any sense for you, my reader, friend or not, who are famished and so hungry for Metal information and its expected secrets, but if you perceived my OBSESSION profile, then you definitely have already grown to be my psychiatrist. I don't need to see a priest or a doctor to treat myself for this particular problem. I only demand and yearn for Kogaionon in order to satisfy all my "secret" life hidden desires, state which is constantly fighting for supremacy... its own regency and exclusivity... Which way should end this ceaseless struggle? I gather it's much too early and far beyond my knowledge to appreciate...

(30.05.2001)

Retorics

.kogaionon.



GOD

interview

GOD, a very known band from Romanian underground, but in the same time a controversial one... Why? Let's go to hear peculiar details from the Castor, the voice of the group.

Hi Costel and nice to see you. How was the show? Bikes, leather, Metal music, drinks, great people... a good atmosphere for having a blast...

"Hi Doru. How could have been a bikers party? It was great, just as you say, all sorts of bikes, beautiful women (yeah, we are in Romania), lots of beer, meat bolts... and the most important thing... a big crowd (approximately 2 thousand people which payed for a ticket) and a great atmosphere for too much of a blast. I should mention the fact that for many kinds of these gatherings are invited bands from the Romanian underground metal scene. The only weak point of this gathering was the site which was too far from Bucharest, getting there was a problem, so there have not been many fans of the extreme metal who could arrive there and mostly being in front of the scene. Although, in these conditions, all the bands proved their professionalism and they played their music as if there had been hundreds of people in front of the scene."

Surprisingly or not, you have been jamming all over the country, in spite of the fact that you haven't released an album for a long time. Has GOD such a high level quotation?

"Indeed, we have been playing almost everywhere we could... for example, last year we played 10 times, in spite of the members' number and we had to play being two or three, helped by the CD; we have played for 7 times this year only, but I have to mention that

we play in a five's formula (voice, guitar, bass, drums and violin) and we are doing the best in order to bring a keyboard player to gather around the band and to come back to the sixth's formula that made us known along the last years. Has GOD a high level quotation?... Well, I say that the answer itself comes from the many metal fans (despite of few voices that criticized us) that came at every gig that were positive to our old well-known tracks and the new ones. Other advantages are the GOD-Sublime T-shirts that sold very well (the first stock is already sold out!!!) and everybody asks us when will appear on the market the Aura album."

What is the matter with your fans? Have they separated in opposite groups? An entire campaign of defamation started a while ago towards GOD...

"No, I do not believe that. Actually, besides of the ones who do not know anything else but to criticize us or to swear us, our fans remained faithful and they showed that to us past 2 years. When they were close to us in the most difficult moments that the band went through and I am talking about all the concerts that we played helped by the CD. A small campaign of defamation against us is present but not only it... we could see it in the case of Negura Bunget and I still do not want to believe that there are "black" thoughts of certain people to defame the bands that made history in the Romanian underground and that kept the flag up, despite of hardships and problems of all kind."

You are thought to be very vain. Why are you so arrogant?

"People talk a lot (and you know it is a 'quality' of the Romanian people), but the ones that know us better are sure that the things are different. I say that every singer seems to be vain... but you very well know that at every gig you re caught in the flame. You are stressed out, too? You think how to get everything right and that is why to some it seems that you are infatuated. There are even some moments when you are not yourself and in this case too the people may get the wrong impression of your behaviour... I am not trying to put myself in a favourable light, because I do not have to; everybody is free to think what they want. But I know how the things stand and I mind my own business, because if you listen to all the opinions and really care, you won't get anywhere."

In spite of the rumors, GOD has a good reputation in Romania. Why is GOD identified with the Lapusneanu brothers? Are the other members of the band neglected?

"You very well know the thing with the gossips; I think that when you are being talked about means that you are important. Without being less-modest, our band is very popular in Romania and this fact cannot be denied by no one. Why does GOD equals my brother and I? Well, I say that it is a simple thing. The two of us and the present bass-player started the band, me and my brother remained in the band all these 9 years, we kept the band alive (even when we were just the 2 of us), after Dray and Elena went to the USA and other members left. No, of course not, every member of ours had a contribution and made a difference more or less in our songs; we want to thank them for what we are today."

You have a new violin player from Suceava. Your old bass-player came back with a look rather punk than metal. What can you tell me about the present formula of the band?

"Yes, the violin player Diana Vartolomei is from Suceava (and has been on board for 1 year and a half) and this year she has matriculated at College in Iasi; the bass-player Dan Cozma with his punk-hair style (in the old times he was the second guitar-player of the band) used to have long hair past years. He listens to extreme metal mostly like us and has this hair-style because it suits him and his look is his choice. We choose our own look without being influenced by nobody... The other member of our band is Paul Balan (student in Iasi and he was member of bands like Tenebre and God Fearing)."

People talk that in this formula you try to keep the image from your good-old times. Am I wrong?

"It is natural that after a period of glory there has to come a time to come back at maximum. It has to be lots of work, rehearsals, good concerts and so the crowd will see that we are not trying to keep the glory image and that we are doing our best to be what we once were and perhaps to overcome ourselves..."

The 2 albums released by Bestial Records were best sold in Romania after Negura Bunget. Although, Adi Mihailov hasn't offered you any other deal. Why? I have heard that you are in a smouldering conflict.

"You are perfectly right. Our albums had a great success and they became the best sold out albums from the country beside Negura Bunget. I believe that Adi from Bestial could answer you better at this question; I do not want to stick my nose in Adi's business; and regarding the conflict... I abstain. I do not want to beat around the bushes. What has passed. We have to move on."

Another conflict would be the one with "Bucovina", with Crivatz. He sang with you in the band and now... What is the truth? "Bucovina" was at a time some kind of satellite of GOD.

Almost all the concerts in Moldavia were made together, your popularity being a great help for the younger band... And now you are arguing... "I won't insist on the matter, all there is to say is that we helped them a lot, we took them with us in almost all the gigs we had, making them known; we asked Crivatz to play the bass, when we had no bass-player in 2001... But then he changed the tactic, like a snake. In spite of all, we didn't gossip about him, because it is not who we are and we just ignored him. He hurt us very much."

How couldn't you have been gossiped about?...when you do not have any albums released... you are not content with your own lives, aren't you? I have heard that you are not that gooder friends with Nelu Brandusan/Pro Music, although you attended to this festival. There have been a few disagreements. How are things standing now?

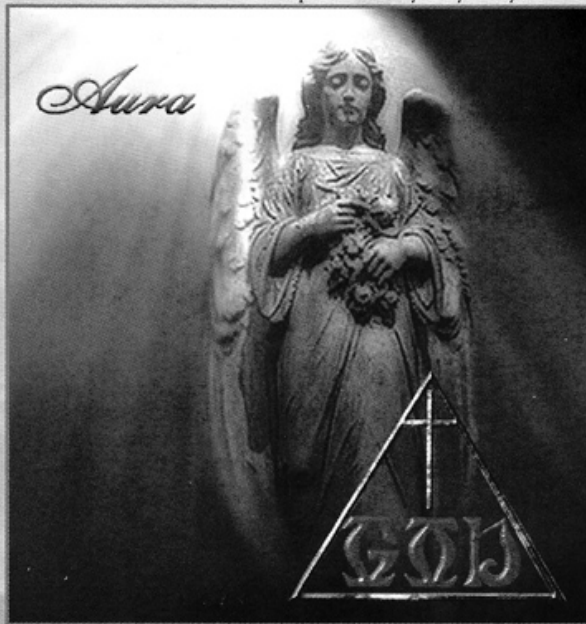
"You are right about this one, too. At this certain moment, you get tired of all the gossip and try to be more detached. No more albums...(for many reasons) the important thing is that we have been trying for 2 years to release the 'Aura' album on the market but we cannot do it because we do not have the means and nobody helped us; it is very difficult... We are not the only that are going through a ruff time, I say that the crisis reaches the whole underground movement, the rescue is coming from the many concerts and lots of fests there have been lately. We are not so unsatiable with our own lives, you very well know that there are better and worse periods of time in life, the most important think is to hope of better days...Onestly, we don't have any reasons to be upset. We attended the fest organised by Nelu Brandusan in Cluj gladly, but what happened next is another story. I won't argue

about it, we are sick enough in the existing fights and I don't want to start a new focus..."

Some facts about your concerts are the white shirts that became an old ritual as well as the cover-version "Alma Mater". In matter of scenical innovation, it seems you are overcomed. Is the crowd bored to see you live on the stage?

"I don't know how much overcomed is the cover-version of 'Alma Mater', when the crowd always asks for it. I don't know how much overcomed is the scenic image of white shirts,too... It is well known that a lot of people criticise the scenic image of most of the bands in our country. In our case, the fact seems to be boring, but, as you have seen, in Bucharest (there have been 2 or 3 concerts more) we have played dressed in shirts, but BLACK! Inovations? I ask you how many bands ought new images in our country?... I do not think that there is any other band that may be recognized immediately because of the scenic image like us... and I say it is a pity that lesser bands are preoccupied about their wardrobe, because it has its role in the image of a band. I don't think people are bored with seeing us live, at least we have not noticed, on the contrary, we think that people want to see and hear us play. Let us get real! How many other bands besides us and Negura Bunget can gather crowds up to 3 hundred people? We have succeeded this thing last year and this year, too. So the conclusion is simple that the crowd and the fans still believe in us, in spite of the rumors, the gossips totally unfounded."

About the "Aura" album, I had been hearing staff for 2 years now that it may be released in America, at HMM or with 2 A Computers. Everybody let you



down. The band is a myth in Romania and you are not able to get a sure deal. It seems to be a paradox.What do you think?

"Indeed... just about everybody let us down, but we still have hope to release it with the help of 2 A Computers (with the help of Adi Zavoianu) by the end of this year. Maybe that we are a myth and that is why no one is able to offer us a contract... But the problem is that almost no one can... There are few people involved in this movement. Not many records labels... That is why many albums are self-produced, just like our case is."

I listened some tracks of the album and they seem to be more heavy than the ones before. Even more, the Gothic dimension becomes Electro, the change of the sound being a choise in fashion, but a bit too much for our underground metal music.

"Yes, the tracks on 'Aura' are more heavy, they have more rhythm with that Electro tendency in combination with Gothic, Death or Black Metal riffs. It may be a bit too much for our country, but we shall

see at the right time; by now, the people reacted quite well to the new tracks."

I asked you when you were in Cluj why don't you let your voice to be natural. Those grunts seem to be quite chaotic, even more, you do not have a female voice... Everything seem to be based on your voice and your brother's guitar. Don't you think it would be better to change the direction?

"I will contradict you here or better said I will explain a few things that you do not know, as well as most of our fans. On the album there are 3 voices - 2 brutal and 1 melodic - and there is a female voice (we used it more than ever), the one of Ioana Doroftei (Elena's sister) ... so not everything is based on my voice and my brother's guitar. Our biggest problem is that no one can sustain the female voice in our concerts and not even the keyboards that have a great importance on 'Aura'. It is natural that not even you or the rest of the fans could realize how the new tracks sound like. It is great that we started rehearles with a new keyboard player and maybe in our new concerts will sing more tracks from "Aura" so that they may sound as well as the ones included on the album. This is why we believe that the album will be a hit, because people like them as we used to play them, even if they were at half of their value. God help us to release it this year so that you and the others may convince of its value."

Referring back to "Aura". CNN has informed that the release of the album will take place in a fine club in Bucharest, which has to do with B.U.G. Mafia, when a few sensual women will combine an erotic style and natural leather with a synthetic one, maybe even some pirotehnic effects. Are the Lapusneanu brothers going to appear wearing the suite and with short hair? Or topless, with a huge GOD tattoo on the chest? Or wearing the blackers make-up? Give me all the details about the album: the sound, the cover, the tracks, the lyrics, the guests...

"So, if we are going to release it as we planned, it will be very cool. It will be a big club, we will prepare a few surprises, but there is no point in revealing them now. It wouldn't have the charm and the impact we are hoping for! I hope we will have the money and the help we need so that everything to be great. No way! We won't appear wearing a suite and with short hair, not even topless. We don't practice weight-lifting, we are not on diets or anything else, we have no muscles to show, a less the people want to see our tummies. The make-up does not represent us, so it is out from the beginning! As I was telling you, the album and the cover too has something different: it will contain angelic statues, different colours, and more, our faces will not appear on it. The sound, I say, that will be modern and new enough, according to the requirements of our times... The lyrics have somehow the same thematics as the old ones with slight changes as they have been written by a friend of ours, Codrut (from Suceava). There is one track in Romanian called 'Calatorul' (The Traveller) which is a mourning song from Bucovina and the rest are in English or Latin. 'Aura' (the song title of the album) is classical gothic and so is 'I'm Nothingness'. The rest like 'Spirito Sancto' (the lyrics are in Latin), 'You're Everything', 'The Traveller' or 'Illumination' combine all the metal genres and 'Shining' is the most Electro track."

You should know that I've never agreed with what you define the concept christian - orthodox metal. I have always thought it to be new-age bullshit in GOD style. Where does this idea come from? How can you debate with my ideas? Even more, people say you think yourselves to be true christian believers. But you behave badly, you swear...It seems to be a cheap behaviour, even shallow.

"Yes, it is our concept; everybody has his own 'modus vivendi' and every band sings about what they want. We did not do it because it was hipp, but because it was our believe. It doesn't mean that we are

religious fanatics, but we simply believe in something real and it is not just a facade or just an image. The fact that we swear, we drink, we have fun does not mean that we don't really believe (it is a pitty swearing about clerical things), we know our limitations and we know when we sin, we have never preached anything, we just showed to the world what we are and what we want and nothing more... we have never urged or obliged somebody to listen to our music and songs, we have never asked anybody to be the way we are... I think it should be best that everyone should mind his own business, his own believe and he wouldn't care much about the ones around him and so we manage to change a few things about the mentality that doesn't let us evolve. For example, we did not care that Negura Bunget or Hator were pagan or Satan believers... and for this matter we couldn't ask them to sing with us, to have a drink with them..."

The split of the band had been announced with a lots of noise. After the departure of Dray and Elena in USA, you found a possibility to go to Spain. Everything seemed to have a remarkable finish... then you were reborn. Unfortunately, the coming back message wasn't perceived in the same way, some voices said that GOD was history, only Lapusneanu brothers are just playing with the name GOD, singing in two and a computer. Do you remember those times? How was it exactly?

"There have been 2 or 3 times and only once it had been said officially, the rest had been just rumours. Yes, that concert from Deva in 2001 should have been the last GOD show, but I lost the visa for Spain, because I wanted very much to sing again for the last time before leaving the country. I know that it was meant to be, like every other thing happened in my life, whether good or bad. We tried to have a great finish (as you said), and if it was meant to be, should we have not continued doing what represented us. Why have we, the Lapusneanu brothers, been criticized for maintaining the band alive, although we had to make compromises? We did it for GOD, for our fans and for the underground metal scene from Romania; we didn't do it for money."

If from the sales of your album you could have saved some money, from the sales of GOD T-shirts you could have went to Hawaii. I have seen a lot of GOD T-shirts worn by the fans. Have they been so well sold? Even better than the Negura Bunget ones?

"You make me laugh. As I have said before, GOD hasn't made any money from sailing the 2 albums. Although, the GOD-Sublime T-shirts sold very well (made on our money). I do not know how many sold

Negura Bunget. I know that we just have to sell a new stock and, of course, we are prepared to make new T-shirts with Aura, after the album will be on the market."

It is annoying to visit your site and to see that it is upgraded once at 2 or 3 years. Isn't it a lack of respect for your fans?

"We have had a lot of problems with our site, then it was a period after 2000 when we were a bit down because of the band's breaking up and we had no idea what to do and so the only things updated on the site were the dates of the concerts... Anyway, in the near future, the new GOD site will appear!... I also want to appologize in the name of the band to the fans for this matter."

What do you think of the Romanian bands? What is your opinion about the Romanian music scene compared to the one that was 7-8 years ago? I remember that New Age, Grimegod and Gothic were great competitors of yours...

"Even now, there are great bands, but a few years ago, the Romanian metal scene had been better represented. We can remember Grimegod, Abigail, Gothic, New Age, Deimos, Interitus Dei, Makrothumia etc... It is great that now things are happening, a lot of new bands appeared, there are many concerts... it is not so easy with the record labels, but maybe this problem will be solved eventually."

How is your tattoo business going? Which is your most weird model ever made? How long does it take and what your prices are? Give me some technical details, perhaps you could convince me to get one, too. What is the difference between what you do and what the others do?

"Very well, hard to say considering the 3 thousand tattoos I have made by now and various models. The working time depends on how complex the certain model is, how many colours it contains... The prices vary from person to person, depending on a lot of things, such as how much it requires. It would be hard for you to write the technical details; it would be better to come visit me and I will explain them to you face to face (if you were a GOD fan, I would do it, but else what is there for me to gain? Maybe in the next life, mate!-ED). I shall mention that all the equipment is steril and it is very expensive. The difference between me and the others can be seen at the end of the work and this because I have attended the high-school and the college, section graphics. Just what you need to make a good tattoo. This is why there are few people that can make realistic tattoos or

better said art on the skin (body-art). This is why I'm different.

How are the other members? What are they doing for a living?

"As I said, the violin player (Diana) is student and so is Paul (the drummer), Dan (the bass-player) works in an internet-cafe, my brother does piercing (it is a phobia that runs in the family-ED)."

In Buzau, I saw fans that asked you for autographs. How does it feel to be a star? What do you write them?

"This does not happen to me or GOD only and it did not happen only in Buzau... A star? It is too much and, frankly, I don't like the word. What do I write them? Something I have always written to all... When I will give your 1st autograph, you will see (I think you have written too much and not only your adrenalin has risen, but your temperature, too-ED)."

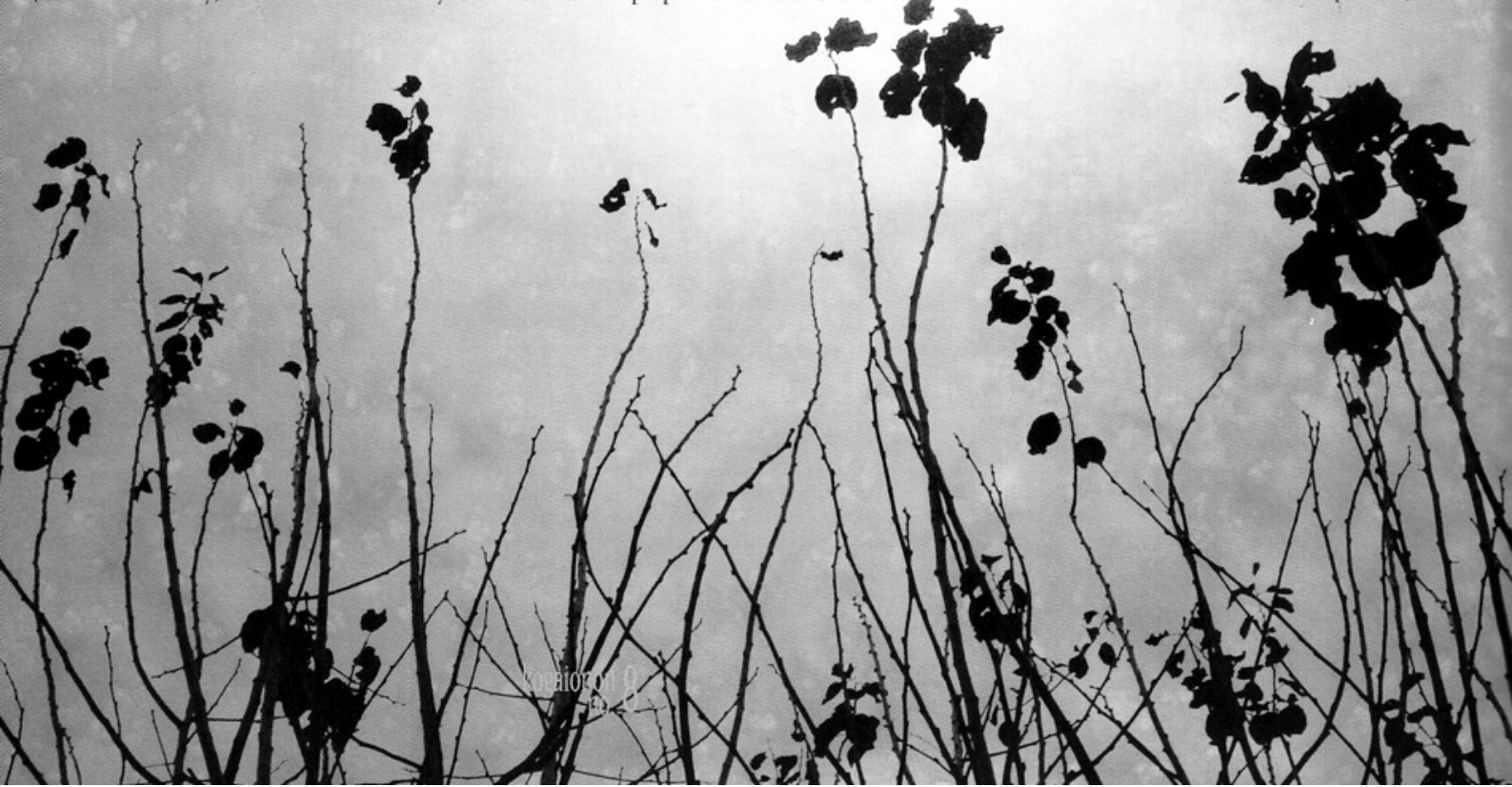
Your dream is to sing with MOONSPELL. What do you think your chances are? Do you still hope in their arrival in Romania? Maybe they will play a GOD-cover like Iris with Uriah Heep.

"That is right, but it is just a dream that may not ever become reality, but changes always exist. It only depends on how many... I know a saying: 'A man keeps hoping until he dies'. I would be delighted to play with Ribeiro&Company Alma Mater song and maybe the people will stop saying that it is overdone."

It is enough. What do you think we should have said more? What should the fans know more? Thanks a lot for the interview and a final question: where do you see yourselves in five years?

"You are right. My fingers ache because of too much writing. The fans should know -first of all- that we thank them from the bottom of our heart that were and still are close to us and that we will do our best not to let them down and I can assure them that 'Aura' will reborn the band GOD from its own ashes. Thank you, Doru, for the interview and I would like to say that it is the greatest interview that I have ever had. It is exciting, with a lot of deeper meanings and it was a great pleasure for me to answer (too much talking and nothing concrete on the delicate matters that I asked you about your conflicts with the others-ED). I hope I have myself understood and that we cleared a lot of issues and controversies. I shall end here. Ciao!... And the famous 'God Bless You All!!!' I will answer to your last question in 5 years. (Where is your maturity, Costel? Let us hope it is on your new album, good luck!-ED)".

September, 2002



I sensed and perceived a strange paradox, when thinking with my eyes closed of my existence (including its material aspect) if depending on this affair often named "music"... The state of comfort relax and gratification which I am sure I'd experience at a first impulse and thought would disappear in a few seconds after, when I'd become aware of all up coming compromises required: X band owns a \$ budget followed by a few zeros; Y label organizes a fabulous gig featuring all its bands but inviting also some commercial bands in the name of maximum efficiency; Z magazine would promote interviews with interesting bands while the advertising swallows dozens of pages and moreover, sometimes, are present as well all mediocre bands-successfully representing the fashion trend and, besides all, an important source of money for most of art dealers ...; quantity takes quality's place, fashion replaces old values and originality stands for an almost forgotten chimera... Sad, shameful dishonouring yet true and real. Should we be pleased or even happy for this pragmatic Underground scene exists or simply question if it was better not to take place at all? The Elite has disintegrated in masses, everything mixed into an unstrained immeasurable chaos. Is it the challenge... changing or should it be considered evolution? It is already dreadful the thought we might have found a possible correct answer. When it happens to find from 30 CDs monthly received and listened to only 2 or 3 of some interest, which is 10%, it is obvious and natural to start inquiring if the rest of 90% does not induce a revolting nausea state. In time, that feeling determines you to relinquish everything you used to love, experience, breath or respect and adore. It may be quite possible or even true that I might have been aging or simply surpassed by new trends ... but what if the existence of parallel worlds confuses?! (20.10.2001)

Retorics

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KARMAKOSMETIX

Interview



After almost two years of pause, I decided to enter again the realm of IN THE WOODS... band even if dissolved some time ago. I have now, as a dear special guest its vocal, Jan Kenneth Transit, a very peculiar and appreciated character due to his unique voice. Quite as I expected and as it actually seemed obvious and natural, mista tranzitjan followed his inner quest by traveling all over the world in the meanwhile. At the end of this Winter Jan Kenneth dedicated himself to explore South Europe. Let us find out where he might be right now...

Hello Transimutha... you ceaseless passenger, what is your life, where are you traveling any more and, finally, where are you just now? This month we've been talking three times and each contact we had revealed you were in three different places, last time we got in touch I guess you were someplace in Denmark...

"Hey-ho Doru! Right now I'm at an Internet-cafe in my home-town of Christiansand answering your naughty little questionnaire. I'm presently flat broke after mine and Terje's (NAERVAER) journey through Central-Europe last month, and have no prosperous plans for extensive traveling until after Summer."

When I last interviewed you (2000), I remember you were in South America while Amazons and Machu Pichu simply are just a few exotic places I can recall relating to your eternal quest... I have just seen, when watching TV, some frames from the Brazilian Carnival... do you feel nostalgic... are you still connected to that place such as experiencing exquisite memories? You were telling me about a certain beautiful girl you found there...

"Ahhh, shit! Did I tell you about that girl?! Heh heh... must have been the thin air of the Andes-mountains that made my mouth run wild.... Anyway, she was a precious little creature to say the least. Yeah, I often think of that Latin-American year as good memories, and I'd certainly like to get back in the near future. If I manage to get some jobs here and there throughout Summer, I definitely wanna go to Mexico, as that was the only place I didn't get to go on my last journey. Brasil, on the other hand, is a country I could move to tomorrow if options were close at hand..."

I would be lighthearted if you agree for a synthesis of your last two years, in other words, disclose and confess what you have been doing since you have come from the American continent.

"Different things you do when you hang around your home-place, I guess... I had a job for a year, combining carpentry and being some sort of social-worker for heavy-duty drug addicts. That was quite an interesting experience, so to speak, but there was a lot of pressure involved due to different circumstances, so I decided to quit and attend university instead sort of taking a year off from rising at six every morning, heh heh... the last eight months I've been studying history there + done a couple of exams. Besides such activities, we (me and a couple of friends of mine, Tommy and Stein) have again kicked off our little trio, SO?!, I've been writing a few songs on my own which I haven't recorded yet and I've started playing the drums

extensively in a band called HUGE BROWN. We do quite a lot of parties and stuff too off course, but that's a different story, I guess."

And if we came to 29th of December 2001 ITW farewell live performance...tell me what was it like? How did you feel? I've heard beer was incredibly expensive... In your opinion, what did the ones who weren't there lose?

"Actually, it was the 29th of December the year before (ohhhh, yes, time is too faster for my life-ed), and to be honest, I can't remember too much of it these days. I remember I was happy it was the last gig of the band, as the project started getting on my nerves. IN THE WOODS... have always been a personal band and sometimes things got a little bit out of hand. Expensive beer? Well, that's Norway for ya! It was nothing exceptional for this gig, it's just the way things are, I'm afraid... you see, here in Norway, we have a Christian government that believes that rising the taxes on alcohol makes people drink less-need I say more? Well, I guess the one's who didn't show up missed out on the best gig we've ever done as a band (all the guys involved really had good night both technically and mentally). Besides this, they missed out on emptying their wallets, heh heh... even though everything costed so much, we lost lots of money on that gig, but that didn't matter to much I guess, as it became a tradition after a while, losing money on the band."

Is there any shade of truth that ITW split because of Botteri brothers' lack of interest in such style? Deep inside yourself, do you feel regrets for this band exists no more?

"Not at all. When I left for Latin-America back in the summer of '99, I already told the other guys that I was uncertain whether I wanted to continue singing in the band when I came back. I was at the time so tired of all the work it involved, and being in the band made me stop listening to music in general until just a couple of months ago. I guess I burned myself out completely. When I started traveling, I didn't bring any music at all, so I ended up listening to pan-flutes and all that sort of stuff you get over there. Anyway, on my return that next summer, mista x-botteri told me he wanted to stop doing the band as well, and I was so relieved, it's hard to explain. That's the story basically. When both of us wanted to call it a day, it was pointless for the other guys to continue. But we decided to go down in a decent way, which I certainly think we did..."

ITW... Rest In Peace. The king is dead, long may live the king! What did 2002 bring new for us? Weeping Forest/Karmakosmetix. Where from came the idea of creating a label? How do you stand in the boss position, are you comfortable?

"Heh heh... Of course I enjoy being the pater familias! Doesn't everyone?! For me it's a natural thing, as I've always handled that sort of stuff ever since we kicked off the band back in '92. The idea of starting a label was x-botteri's, if I remember it correctly. We talked about the fact that it was pretty cool most of us wanted to continue on our own after IN THE WOODS... split up, and it became rather obvious that starting a label was the next step. Throughout the years, we had so many people being curious about the three dots at the end of the band-name, and I always

replied that it was something that never really ended, but would rather take new forms as we went along. As it would be far to dull to call the label IN THE WOODS..., we decided to use that moniker as a domain-name on the web-something which we've now done at www.inthewoods.de. After throwing off the weeping forest-flag that we wanted to use as a carrier for further releases from the woods-camp, we changed it into KARMAKOSMETIX instead. All our future-releases will be carried through that label now."

"Raining Gold" is your first accomplishment and I assume X Botteri is proud of this album. The line-up is remarkable in deed. What can you tell me about this material?

"RAINING GOLD is a project mista botteri worked upon long before IN THE WOODS... split up, and this was material he didn't think would fit in the band, which means it's rather 'old' material as a whole. He was very happy for it when the recordings were completed, but he doesn't seem too satisfied now that he's started recording the follow-up. The album was pressed in small numbers and as soon as it's sold out, we'll withdraw it from further sales. Some of the material might pop up later, but we've decided to leave it be for now. You will anyway find one of the tracks as mp3 on the web-site, and that song will remain there until Autumn, when the next album of his is due to be released. For more info on RAINING GOLD, it's better to check out the web-site. Right here and now, it's hard for me to explain the music. It's a world of it's own..."

Christer was telling me he intended already to start over a second STILLE OPPRØR album even if right after „Project213" did not enjoy great success. Do you have any other details to come up with?

"Yeah! Christer is currently recording the next STILLE OPPRØR-album. So far, I've heard a couple of outputs, and it's definitely gonna be a killer album-far from the stuff he accomplished on the debut. If he was a boy on the first album (he's 'only' 23 years at present), he certainly became a man on the second."

Regarding CHRISTOPHER SUN I know nothing but a timid association with 'Dreamer'. Can you enlighten us about this band? Please, let us know more concerning this band.

"CHRISTOPHER SUN is the former IN THE WOODS...' bassist c:m botteri's child. With quite a little help from his twin-brother, mista x (being chris), he's currently recording for the 'Dreamer'-album. I haven't heard to much of the music yet, but I believe it's as significant as he is as a person."

Last week you were at Oddvar a:m's home. Should I understand you rehearsed for this alternative project new compositions? "Psychodelics" is already available in MP3 version but I find its sound rather techno to my taste. What is your point of view, which terms would you describe it?

"Hard to say, really. The thing that I've personally focused on while starting up the label, is that it will be an institution with more focus on quality music than on any specific genre. We make such different kinds of music, that anything else would be out of the question. Thus I have no urge to label Oddvar's music. Like you mentioned, the songs can be found on mp3's via the web-site. Anyone with an access to the web can

check out and label on their own."

TRANSIT AFTER MIDNIGHT or maybe Brasil is another musical project you desire to give life in a short while. Well, I must confess my data basis is quite limited as far as this experiment is concerned, will you offer me a few details, in fact as many as you feel like?

"Transit am is basically mine and Oddvar's little baby together, but as we're pretty occupied with our own projects these days, we've decided to put it on ice for a while. To be honest, I'm not quite certain what we'll sound like, but I guess we'll produce a little cross-over between the two of us."

Do you have in mind for the future particular targets or purposes regarding Weeping Forest? What kind of bands would fit your expectations in order to sign with your label? Do others also, except ITW' former members, have access to your label?

"We've decided that we'll limit the label to IN THE WOODS... related projects-at least a year from now on. If we get things going the next twelve months, we'll see what we can/wanna do about it. Our first official release will be a sampler CD which will contain one song from each of the artists involved. Most of the projects are IN THE WOODS... related while others are close friends of ours from Christiansand. I hope to have all material collected by the end of the month (march), and if I can make that happen, we hope to go for a release in April/May (not yet, unfortunately, October-ed)."

Does SO?! exist any more? Tommy told me it was to be released a new demo, but I have no other information, what's up?

"We're currently recording an album and five songs are accomplished thusfar. If we manage to get our asses moving, we'll have it released this Autumn."

As far as NAERVAER is concerned what can you tell me, any news?

"NAERVAER is put on ice for a while. Terje studies in Denmark, and I believe he'll stay there the next three years, or so. One thing we might do, though, is to record a few songs this summer and have them released via Karmakosmetix together with the demotacks we released back in '95."

GREEN CARNATION produced quite an earthquake and shocked everybody with the second album and Tchort invoked you as well as Synne and Anders to participate. What kind of impression did this album make on you and what should be the nature of your contribution and collaboration with Tchort?

"I haven't listened to much to the album, due to my lack of interest in music, mentioned earlier in these pages. I know Terje via the Botteri-brothers-they used to play alot together in the early, pre IN THE WOODS... years and also on the first G.C.-album. He asked me if I could pop by the studio one afternoon and help him out with some vocals at the beginning of his song. I came, I sang and I left, that's about my relation to GREEN CARNATION."

Can you make, for yourself and me as well, a list of the bands you were engaged in? Should we prepare ourselves for expecting more surprises?

"Hmmm... see if I can remember all of them, heh heh... well, the first band we ever did was called EMPIRE (that was me, Stein and a couple of other friends and we were only seven or eight years of age). After that ceased to exist due to pretty dull rehearsals and little equipment, I stopped doing music for a while 'till I joined a band called INNHALATOR (where also Terje from NAERVAER was involved for a while, besides a short appearance by Oddvar am). After this, there's been alot of bands, maybe to many.... here we go; IN THE WOODS..., NAERVAER, PAN, SO?!, HEMPELTEMPLE, CIRCUS GILMOUR, GREEN CARNATION, OPUS FORGOTTEN and a few others I cannot recall at the moment. Oh, forgot

HUGE BROWN, a really cool project I'm really proud to be involved with!"

If Stavanger imposed, itself, in time, as Gothic bands' headquarters, is there any resemblance for Kristiansand to become the State house for Avantgarde/Progressive Metal? Point out, please, some other bright promising bands which belong to this town.

"There's a lot of really cool acts down here, and if you look at it from a Norwegian point of view, you can say that Christiansand have always come out with a lot of weird muzak through the years. Currently there are bands such as SCARIOT, GREEN CARNATION, TRAIL OF TEARS, SOLEFALD, CIRCLES END, TONKA, GUARDIANS OF TIME etc, all in the Metal-genre and most of them have signed with foreign labels. Besides Metal, we've got really interesting acts such as BLACK BONE CHAPEL, NUD, ANGELS MOTEL, HUGE BROWN, JAMES BAND, RING, MERRY NOVEMBER, TERRYOON and a whole lot more I can't recall the names of right now. Might be that Christiansand will point itself out as what you mentioned, but right now the 'scene' here is not that tied together by bonds. We shall see what the future brings, though..."

How does your job, carpenter, conciliate with the one of musician ... not to mention of the tourist one? Don't you think it must be the proper time for you to grow a family and raise children? I do have a child, Terje Vik does also and so do many-many friends... Aren't you getting any older as well?

"Heh heh... sometimes it crosses my mind, but usually I don't think to much about it. At the moment, I don't even have a girlfriend and besides that, my life is far to unstructured these days to comprehend family-affairs. I got a family in my mother and sister and right now that certainly enough for me."

What is to be said about Synne Diana? Did she give up music activity? Since you know her pretty well, can you tell me, does she intend or take in consideration the idea of setting up her own musical project?

"She's been talking about it for a while, but she's not certain what she wanna do musically. I believe she'll get into some activity on her own in a while, but right now she doesn't work on anything in particular."

Have you heard of Tiziana/Misanthropy in the meanwhile? What about Russ Smith? He quite enjoyed our last interview.

"Haven't talked to Tiziana for a while, which is quite natural as she doesn't release our stuff anymore. She still sells a little of our back-catalogue from our years at Misanthropy, but besides sales-statements and that sort of stuff, we don't talk to much. Me and Russ exchange mails now and then, but not as much as we used to via snail-mail a few years back. I have limited access to the web, and thus it's not a communication-channel I visit to frequently."

Your site made a great impression since you have so many fan visitors... I can conclude, from your Guestbook, ITW... still is a favorite band for many people. Did you even look upon the possibility of gathering once again under the same designation (lettering)? I do appreciate the success would be guaranteed, no doubts about, moreover, I believe you would also reach financial tides with a new album. Do you agree with me?

"That might just be, but I couldn't in my wildest fantasies imagine that we once again came together to play as IN THE WOODS... I know some of the other guys would have enjoyed that, but personally, the band is dead and buried forever. The financial side of things doesn't bother me that much as long as my hearts not in it."

Which are your goals to be achieved this year as far as music is regarded? Do you have peculiar personal

desires you expect to fulfill in 2002? What other different countries do you plan to visit?

"This Autumn, I'd like a trip to Mexico, like I mentioned, but apart from that, there's no extensive plans thus far. On the other hand, I hope to start the recordings of my 'solo' album. This, however, depends on my housing-situation. We've got a greedy landlord at the moment that's to found of money, and we might have to move both our stuff and the studio before Summer (landlord wanna cash in bigtime on summer-tourists). If we don't have to move, I hope to get some recordings started this July."

And since we came to such issue, as a pathfinder, let us know what do you usually pack each time you decide to cruise and which are the things you never forget or go without? About how much money\$/EUR do we speak when taking a trip?

"Heh heh... I guess I pack basic stuff for a regular short-trip (say 3-4 months), like guitar, sleepingbag, a towel, a couple of pants-you know, the regular stuff needed. I also usually carry a dictaphone and some writing-material in order to be able to write music etc. on the road. And the cash? I guess I would need something like 2500-3000 euro for such a trip like that into Mexico, but of course it depends where you go and all that. Asia, for example, would be a lot cheaper. I guess you can imagine that it takes alot of work to accomplish such a task."

What kind of music do you listen and prefer anymore? What new hobbies did you lately discover? Football perhaps ...or fishing?

"Like mentioned, I've been having a hard time for the past years listening to music. However, there are a few records that I've really enjoyed in between, like 'Solitary Man' by Johnny Cash, 'Love and Theft' by Bob DYLAN, 'White blood cells' by the White Stripes, selected MOTORHEAD albums, Tiger Lillies from London and a few more. I haven't discovered a lot of new hobbies recently, but I was doing a little bit of fishing last Summer, and I still enjoy reading a good book once in a while. Music takes most of my time as a whole, still, and I guess I won't be starting any other activities before I get to finish off the album later this year. The label will occupy more and more of my time I believe, so the only 'thing' I have to think of now is to keep my body in shape one way or the other."

It is better for us to meet again sooner than unreasonably spin out. Do you navigate on internet? What are your preferences to read or to look for when having access to a computer and thus on internet?

"Honestly, I don't surf that much. I mean, if there's something I'd like to know a little more about, I do a little, but usually I don't do it because I'm bored or anything like that. I don't have a computer back home, and that's probably why I haven't gotten into it seriously."

Once again I have no word to thank you enough for your kindness, Jan. My hope is for us to hear of each other in the same terms next year as well. Until then I can only wish for you to preach up, by far many more amazing juicy voyages and, of course, dozens of albums released under new banner. Before turning back to the magic of voyage, send Kogaionon's readers a greeting word...

"Thanx and greetings to you too, mista Doru, I really admire your work! A few are as dedicated as yourself, as it's supracool to see your work carries fruits of different kinds. I hope all is well down there in your precious Carpathians, and that the gypsies still get something to put in their bellies (it seems you know everything about the grey life from here, he, he!!-ed)! And greetings to all your readers as well, of course! Support Doru and his 'Kogaionon' and support ye families... you've only got one and it's precious! Stay cool, rise above."

March, 2002

MONUMENTUM

Interview



"The businessman is killing the artist", said Roberto for 'Kogaionon' magazine No.6, an interview featured in 2000 (otherwise, the best interview I think I've done in my entire journalistic career).

Hello Rob and nice to hear of you again! How are you? Do you still agree with your former sayings since almost two years ago? It seems not. Moreover, the present enlightens your artistic face as it represents at this moment two bands, MONUMENTUM and TWO SOULS...

"Well, actually the sentence is still valid and true, unfortunately, even though you realise that you have to react upon this climate of decadence and somehow have to manage to not surrender. I am deeply disappointed over the actual status of the music market and its artistic exploitations and this thing leads to further more depression and little will to sit down and try to create something. Beside of this, I am doing well and yes, I do remember the previous interview, and it was truly nice."

Regarding MONUMENTUM's history we've already discussed lots of details so, I believe we can skip it. But what about the very present of the band: are you satisfied with the recording of the up-coming 'Ad Nauseam' chapter?

"The usual post-recording musician's frustrations you know... you see things that were supposed to result better in the final mixing but ok, I am 'close' to be satisfied. There was some problems because we mostly created 70% of these songs at home-studios, but then we entered a studio for the final mixing, giving the job to a different person, a producer, and many things sort of disappeared or did not sound as we were used hear them all over the writing and recording process."

Do you have some nice moments to recall as far as the recording process is regarded?

"Not really. The usual fight-against-time syndrome stressed and torn apart again the pleasure to be in a studio... this band is not in the position to take 3 weeks off their lives and enter a studio, so we had to record and mix over night time or weekends..."

During MONUMENTUM recording process everything seems to be possible... for example, Elisa Carrera starts to drums and she actually finished as... a future mother... Great and efficient symbiose, am I right (he, he)? By the way, the father is a MONUMENTUM member, maybe?

"Eh eh... yes, yes... she became a mother in fact after all in November. The father is.... me..."

The band consists in seven members: Daniele Bovo (g, piano) is an old member (except you), Diego Danelli (bass), Andrea Belluci (g, dr), Elisa, and two vocalists, Andrea Stefanelli + Alis Francesca Bos. What can you tell me about them? They are your friends or just a goal to release a new album you may have found in them (as the perfect opportunity to record those ten tracks)...

"Daniele used to play with me since a lot of years. He became a MMM member straight after the 'I.A.C.' album, even though the band's activities were limited (we recorded two songs for two compilations, the Misanthropy Records sampler and the Death SS tribute). Andrea Bellucci is a guy from the electronic scene, he recorded 3 albums as RED SECTOR A on Minus Habens label and is also behind the SON-DHA project, with an album out on RELAPSE RECORDS. I 'met' him via email, sort of... and we continued cooperation in this way, as he does not live in my town so there is no chance for frequent 'physical meetings'. Andrea Stefanelli (vocalist from the Italian band NUVOLA NESHUA) was recommended by a friend of mine, so we gave him a try and he got the job after

a minute (this time we have a vocalist not a speaker!). He also brought in the picture last-hour Francesca to add a few female vocals. Elisa is my wife and she used to play drums in a few underground bands so I started rehearsing track with her basically. But she only managed to record drums on 3 songs before pregnancy went too far. Diego was a friend of her and already played bass with her, so why not keeping a consolidated rhythm section?"

Tatra Records is definitely not a Metal label and the new MONUMENTUM's sound I suppose has no connection with the past. Moreover, I found out your music was focused now on Avantgarde Electronic Pop Way, so, aren't you afraid for the old MONUMENTUM's fans to be disappointed of the new musical orientation?

"I am tired to be afraid for other people's reaction or mood. 'Ad Nauseam' is a reasonable step I believe, because it could have been even much more distant, but we didn't want so. As I said, I have paid in full my debts with Euronymous, Tom Warrior, Burzum Fenriz and what the hell whoever hero of the metal world. Beside of this, at the times of 'IAC' everybody was telling me that it was not a metal album, so why they should expect from us a Judas Priest album now??? Of course we hope that everybody will like this album, but I already know they won't, so the end of the game is obvious and bitter as I don't want to end up to be an idiot like Paradise Lost, Moonspell or My Dying Bride who DO NOT FEEL to play metal at all anymore, tried something different but ended up in total fiascos, so they got back to mother-metal..... I will not do this, so if AdN will be a fiasco because the metal or the gothic people will not buy it, and in the same time nobody from the alternative/pop scene will even notice us, that means that MMM have a reason to exist only in the metal scene, therefore the



band will be split up automatically."

I actually understood by visiting your site, there is one particular idea regarding dying pilots from flights... More precisely, the 'Angor Vacui' track... Do you have an obsession regarding the terrorist attack, maybe?

"Yes, I have an heavy obsession for air-crashes, air disasters. It's no fiction but a real problem for me in fact, as I can't simply take any more flights. That song is my obsession put into music... a sonic nightmare that wants to represent the last two minutes of life of dying pilots during their flight crash. It contains samples taken from VCR (cockpits) recordings of crashing pilots.... Honour to the dead pilots."

Why did you decide on a cover of Fausto Rossi? 'Perche' il amore' seems to be a suggestive name for lovers. Is Roberto a romantic person? Should I take it as an emotional development?

"Mh, I think Fausto Rossi is a character/singer that can only be appreciated by socially disturbed Italian people, and not anybody else. He is very underground... sold only a few records I suppose. The song is in fact not truly romantic. The Amore concept is very soiled and corrupted...."

What should be the target for 'Ad Nauseam' sound? Is it possible to be a challenge for Dimmu's fans, maybe or for Depeche' ones?

"I think that anybody with a musical brain can like the record. It's not that much avantgardistic... after all there is NOTHING to invent anymore in music, everything is said although in different forms. This record is too poppy for the evil metallers, too solar for the vampyric gothic people but too evil for the pop scene... We are a bastard son that will probably be denied by everyone...."

The lyrics? Can you describe the tracks, please?

"Not please.... I am not gonna do it.... I am not too keen on lyricism.... I explained the thing many times over past interviews: I would even record instrumental albums.... or without lyrics. But it's no possible. I have no messages to spread over the world, I am not a mass preacher neither a philosopher.... there's too many of them. The lyrics are just words to identify songs. In our case though, they generally talk about the 'art of falling apart' and to live in decadence but with elegance."

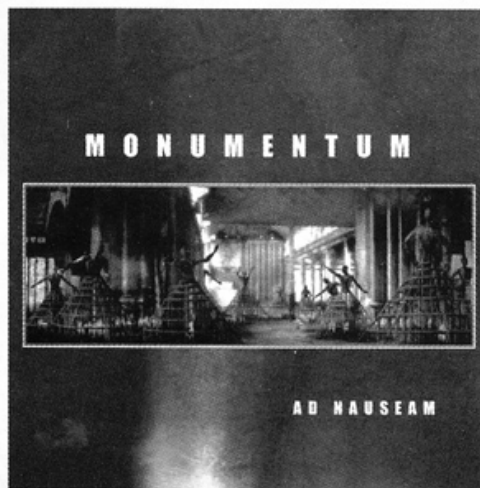
Tell me something about 'Aula della Coprofilia' image (the cover). Which should be the bond with

MONUMENTUM concept?

"Probably the last sentence from my previous answer... DECADENCE WITH STYLE."

Is it possible to see MONUMENTUM live? How will the band look like on the stage, live?

"NO, never. There is no need for us on the road and there is no interest from my side to do so, especially until the moment when we will be here still talking about the chances that metal people will not like us anymore.... and stuff like that. What kind of people should I expect to our concerts? Spiked black metallers? NO thanks."



Do you think I forgot to ask other important details regarding MONUMENTUM present and future?

"Not really... our present is uncertain as you know, and after the 'IAC' album I was telling everybody that we would make another one in 2 years, and then it took 6/7.... so..."

Offer me a few details about TWO SOULS project...

"This is still on a too early stage to talk about it, but this time for sure we will not have the Metal or Non-Metal dilemma, as the band will not even be presented in 'metal' medias or labels. Don't misunderstand me: I am not looking for a giant major deal and I am not dreaming to become a pop star, but you understand that I have different artistic ambitions than being constantly affiliated to a world still dominated by Manowar and Slayer.... ergo, a world where if you take a copy of ROCK HARD from 1985 and one from 2002 NOTHING HAS CHANGED. Still the very same

heroes.... but with pathetic wanna-be-forever-young look-alike.... SIC....."

What kind of music are you listening nowadays? Does CELTIC FROST represent history for you, or just nostalgia?

"The situation of music is very negative, as far as my view goes. I am listening to several different kind of shit, but what I can find everywhere, in any kind of music, is a certain collapse of creativity and every music style is just repeating itself. I can say I have possibly bought 4/5 unmissable records in the last 5/6 years... so I have completely changed attitude... I used to buy like 4/ records per week... now I buy ONE in a month... The music is dead. It's over... in my house at least."

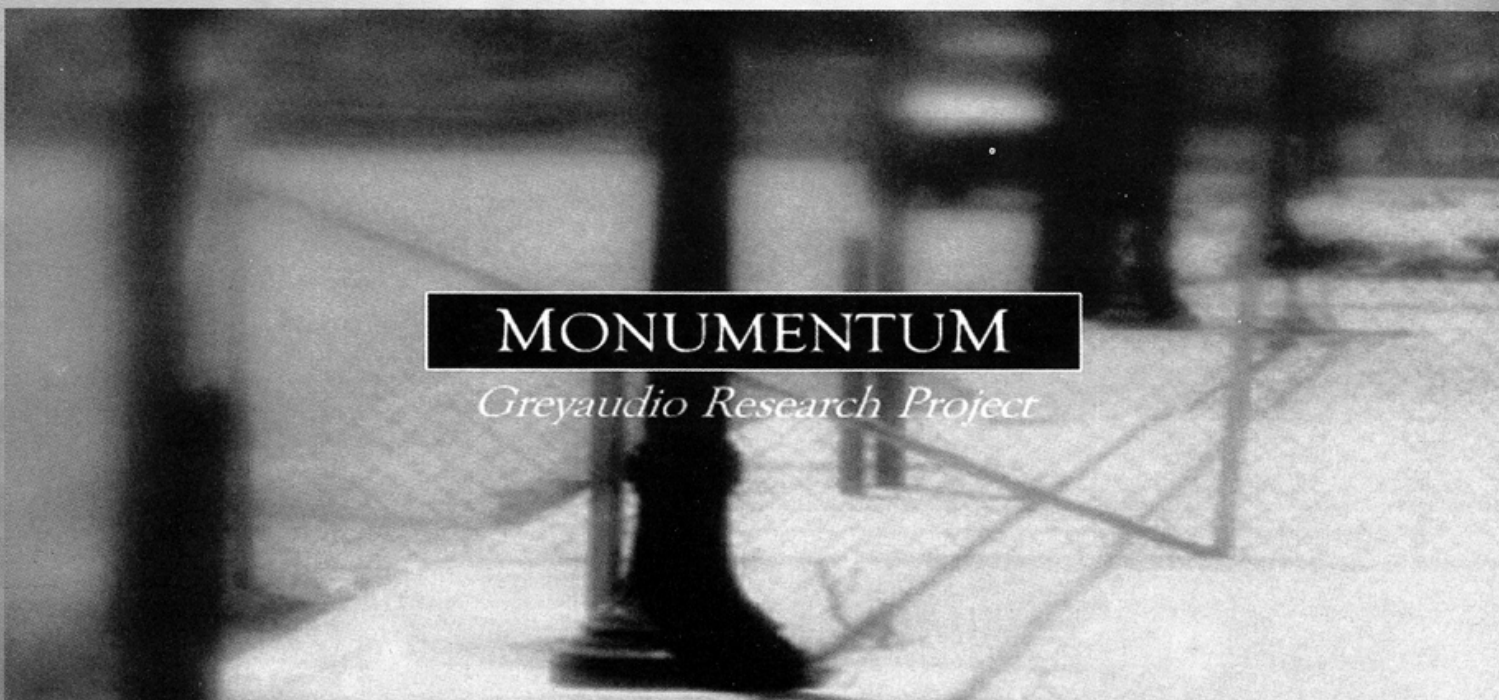
Are you married, do you have children? How does it look a normal day for you?

"2001 was a pretty intense year, giving me a wife and a child and the main working of Ad Nauseam. A normal working day looks like everybody else's working day, no more no less, disregarding if you are selling records or ice creams you depend on people's interest to consume your product. Therefore there are very little excitements in running a record label now. A non-working day looks instead as everybody else's non working day: hobbies, family a few friends."

Roberto, I guess it is enough. Thanks for the interview and I wish you all the best for all of your projects. Your activity in Metal scene is extended for more than 15 years. Have you received the satisfaction for your whole effort?

"Thanks a lot to you as well and good luck with your activities too. You are very dedicated and your interviews are always something special. I am just sorry that my enthusiasm for some of the subjects you would like to hear from me is VERY LOW and therefore I have empty words about. I have received satisfactions with the label and everything else I did 'in the scene', but I now feel like there is nothing to achieve anymore. Probably it's time to pass-by... but you never know..."

September, 2002



MONUMENTUM

Greyaudio Research Project

NEGURA BUNGET

Interview



Hello Negru! What is it like in Timisoara now, when autumn is about to begin?

"Hello Doru! Indeed, the weather is getting cold...but it's quite nice."

You have just finished recording your new album in the same studio where you recorded your first demo. Are you satisfied with the final result? If I got it right you need to mix your material once more. And sound has been a constant problem with Negura Bunget...please give me more details.

"Indeed, we used once again the Magic Sound Studio. Because of time problems and also because of the fact that this time the quality of the sound is much better, we finally decided that the material shouldn't be mixed once more. It's true that we couldn't obtain the sound we wanted in the past but, that's it, what can you do? However, this time things are a lot better and I can only hope everyone will notice that. Anyway, there's one more mastering to be done by code666 in Italy and that will probably improve even more the quality of our sound."

We expect a release by code666 in October...is it still valid?

"I hope so. We still have things to do but we hope everything will go according to the initial schedule. Besides, I don't think it will be a big problem if we release it a few days later."

The Italians say the album will have a very special presentation. I think it's time you give us more details regarding this aspect.

"It's true, we prepare something special once again. Unfortunately, it's pretty difficult to describe. We designed the whole structure of the digipack, though it will be larger, stranger and, we hope, more interesting than a common digipack."

Please give me a detailed presentation of the new material: cover, lyrics, song presentation, music, collaborators, line-up...

"Everything related to album presentation (cover, multimedia, the new site, pictures) has been done with Dan F. Spataru (EncoilMARK) and we are satisfied with the final result. As for the music and the lyrics, they more tightly knit together than in the past. The whole album can be interpreted as a journey through Romanian spirituality, symbolically presented along a calendar year with the 4 seasons concretely identified both at the musical level and at that of the lyrics. Of course, it's not a strict approach but a metaphorical one, even initiatic...the line-up remains the same and the same thing goes for guest musicians (Ursu, who played bass for the recording of the album)."

What is it that makes the new sound different? In other words, which are the signs of your musical maturity?

"I think this time we transposed more directly, through our music, an ideological content that is more consistent than ever before. At the same time, it remains a typical Negura Bunget album where we have tried to create a balance between atmosphere and aggressiveness, between speed and expressiveness...on the other hand, Negura Bunget is not a pretext to prove our virtuosity, but our maturity in writing songs, and even our self-censure. But it's up to others to judge to what extent we succeed in achieving it..."

In Romania, all metal fans are philosophers, they know everything and judge everything. Nothing bad, so far. I have recently noticed an anti-Negura tendency with people stating that you started your musical journey very well but you haven't evolved at

all. Moreover, you combined Norse black metal with elements of traditional spirituality and this is how the Negura myth came into being. What is your opinion? To what extent are these rumors true?

"Everyone has the right to a personal opinion which can or cannot be true. I can imagine there are a lot of people who don't like us for numberless reasons, and I find it normal...I don't think we should convince everybody of our intentions. We perfectly understand that not everybody wants to or can understand what we're trying to do and, as a matter of fact, we always start from this premise."

The band's first name was Wiccan Rede, a name alluding more to Crowley than to Dacian mythology. Once you changed your name, all elements began to have a logic of their own, your message and your music gained a clear fluency. Where from this will of identifying with our ancestors?

"Wiccan Rede was only a step. From the very beginning we considered the Black Metal an extremely serious phenomenon. Wiccan Rede was the first step towards a deeper involvement in the movement. That's how we see things. Negura Bunget is something radically different. It's much more than a simple change of name...As for our relationship with the past, this is a symbolical one; we try to lead to a rebirth of some spiritual essences which, at a certain point, were active in the human mind but they lost their influence with the passing of time. In this context, the relationship with the past is just a segment, a first step towards reestablishing a direct connection with the present."

Face-painting is another element you use. What would be its connection with our lands?

"Actually, we haven't used face-painting for quite some years. This doesn't necessarily mean that we



gave it up completely, but we haven't felt a proper time to do it again. We see it as something that comes naturally at the right time and circumstances. It is not directly related to our native lands, but it is connected to the very idea of Black Metal, with transcending one's identity, with accessing of the archetypes..."

If I remember it correctly, Bestial were first contacted by Code666 some 2 years ago because the latter were very impressed by the graphic presentation of your booklet. Is it true? Why did you sign a contract with them? Weren't there other offers?

"Indeed, the guys at code666 liked the presentation of 'Maastru stetic'. Then, they asked us whether we had a serious contract with Bestial and whether we would be interested in signing one with them. And this is what happened after long negotiations. We had some other offers but they weren't really convincing..."

Give me some details about your video.

"The guys from code666 first asked us to write a new song to be featured exclusively on one of their Better Dead Than Alive compilation (2 digipak - deluxe edition). After writing and recording the new song (Bilutza Studio) we considered making a video as well, especially that the studio had all necessary equipment. Code666 agreed to that (especially that they weren't really involved) and we decided to do it. We worked with Marius Danci (Bilutza/Flying Wood) who shot all the images and also edited the entire material. The basic ideas were ours, of course, and I'd say the final result is pretty good. It was almost entirely shot in the Apuseni and Retezat Mountains and we passed through many adventures. We were also helped by our friend Andrei Nica (special effects, post-processing...)"

You haven't played live in Romania lately. What happened? Your position as the best-known Black Metal band in Romania should be an advantage, right? All the audience has already had enough...

"It's true, we haven't played much lately, mainly because we have been extremely busy with the writing and recording of our new album... so we had to ignore live performances. But I wouldn't say our fans have had enough because we generally haven't played live very often. Anyway, we are currently preparing a few concerts."

I notice some new Black Metal acts who use Negura Bunget as a reference point. What do you think about that? Are you satisfied with it?

"We aren't really interested by such aspects. We are only trying to do our own work as good as we can. Should someone appreciate our work and see it as a reference point... that can only make me happy. But it will never be more than that..."

Your Black Metal has always been raw without Gothic influences or other modern interludes. Why? Don't you like Dimmu's direction?

"In our music we have tried to transpose our own vision upon Black Metal. Of course, this approach doesn't include other elements than those related to the inner structure of Black Metal. Eventually, everything is related to this personal vision and, if others have a different one or none...that's it! Unfortunately, there isn't a clear and concrete definition of what Black Metal is and what it is not (though it would be really interesting to formulate one!) and this aspect generates all controversies about who's 'true' and who's not. This is finally related to the fascination of the Black Metal even if sometimes such disputes may seem puerile. And even if I don't like Dimmu Borgir I have noticed that they proved to be good musicians on their last album, capable of writing intelligent songs, though their reasons for

doing it don't have too many things in common with the ideology of the Black Metal."

How do you see Negura Bunget's future? What would it take for the band to be successful?

"We would be 'successful' if we created an interest for the issues we are trying to promote through our music: preoccupation with Romanian cultural and spiritual traditions and their relationship with the universality. On the other hand, we see Negura Bunget as an opportunity, a chance for our spiritual evolution. If our music would manage to attract other people on the same journey, our goal is achieved..."

You are really involved in the Metal Scene and the 3 issues of Negura Magazine are a proof to that. You also have a webzine though you update it quite rarely. What is the news on this side?

"We are currently working for our 4th issue which is due before the end of the year. It will have interviews with Tormentor, The Kovenant, Limbionic Art, Primordial, Nokturnal Mortum, Thunderbolt... a special code666 feature, a few interesting articles and a lot of reviews. I hope this time we'll have 70 pages because we have some more surprises...I'll also update the site one of these days."

Other rumors say that your success is not a result of your music's quality but of the fact that you were the only Black Metal band who enjoyed constant financial support (Bestial). What is your opinion? Also, is it true that Bestial still makes money from selling Negura Bunget accessories (like T-shirts)? Have you gained much money from your music?

"It depends from what perspective you approach things. We were indeed one of the few Romanian Black Metal bands but that's not our fault. The same thing goes for Bestial. We went to them and convinced them to promote our music (Bestial came into being with our first album). Others could have done exactly the same thing... even with Bestial. But let's be serious... we cannot speak here about I don't know what special support... it's something natural and it characterizes any underground label!"

As for gaining money, things are even more puerile! Who would imagine that you can make money out of music and Black Metal...in Romania? I doubt someone could believe such a thing. Not only that we didn't gain much money but, on the whole, we spent much more than we received..."

As for the gains of the people at Bestial... isn't it normal for a label to gain money out of the music it promotes? Otherwise, it would be impossible to promote it even better. Unfortunately, in their turn, the people at Bestial haven't gained too much... and they still don't gain too much..."

We have talked about concerts. The Italian label will probably offer you some tours. What will Negura Bunget's scene look like? Some pyrotechnic effects, naked women dancing around a fire, a Dacian flag hanging above your drums?

"I also hope to tour after the release of our new



crugu bradului

album. We don't have in mind any spectacular elements for our stage, we'll rather focus on creating a traditional image through the use of special instruments (percussion, xylophone, alpenhorn, dulcimer) and some vestimentary elements. However, all of these will be discrete elements...because, in the end, it's the force of the music that really counts when you're on stage."

Fenriz/DARK THRONE is one of the drummers you admired. What other drummers do you like?

"Actually Fenriz was interesting only on Dark Throne's first album. It's even strange that he suffered such a transformation on the other albums. I also like Frost from Satyricon, Trym - Emperor, Sean Reinert - Death/Cynic...and many others."

What kind of music do you listen to? What about the other members of the band? By the way, who are they and why do you still hide your true names under pseudonyms (do they have a special signification for you)?

"I have listened to a lot of music recently, mainly because of the magazine. Unfortunately, the quality is not always impressive. For the rest, I'm still into Emperor, Immortal, Enslaved, Satyricon, Taake...My colleagues also listen to different types of music. As for pseudonyms, I wouldn't say their role is that of hiding someone. We find them important because they provide us with a symbol, they shift the focus from our own persons, which are not important, towards some broader essences."

What about your spare time? Do you work? What do you do in an ordinary day?

"We're all still studying. None of us works at the moment. We're quite fortunate because our days don't resemble too much and we still enjoy the freedom of making our own program depending on our needs in different moments of our lives."

What about a visit to the hairdresser's? Could you imagine a Black Metal band whose members would have their hair cut and wear suits?

"We have no intention to pay a visit to the hairdresser...all of them having their hair cut and wearing suits...they could hardly make up a Black Metal band. Black Metal is not defined only by the music but also by its spiritual content and even by the image."

The Negura Bunget myth still lives in the heart of many fans. Where would you say idolatry should stop, leaving room for realism?

"I'd say everyone should think alone before doing or saying something."

Well, I think that would be enough. I preferred to have a natural and light discussion because most of your interviews are characterized by a serious, even grave tone, creating the impression that Negura Bunget is an introversive band, carrying a nihilistic and misanthropic message. Maybe it is so but I had a different goal. What do you think about this?

"It's true that sometimes appearances can deceive. I wouldn't say Negura Bunget promotes a message that is directly nihilistic or misanthropic...but that doesn't mean that we don't pay attention to what we say and how we say it. So we are open to friendly discussions, like this one..."

Is there anything more to be said or known? Thanks for the interview and may Zamolxe eternally watch! "Thanks for your support! Stay Black!"

September, 2002

THE END RECORDS

Interview



A real name in the Metal underground could be now THE END RECORDS. Very attractive bands, excellent releases, in just a few years! So, you should try to buy an album of this great label the soonest possible! But for more details, I invite now the boss of the label.

Hi, Andreas! I want you to travel back in time with me... somewhere in 1993, in your college life, the action took place in its tearoom, when, in a certain moment, a guy as long haired as you entered... He wore a t-shirt with ENTOMBED logo, in short time you started to chat and...here you are, after almost ten years, running a label in plain ascendancy. Could we speculate this was in deed the opportunity because of which the label The End Records was given birth, long after you met each other? What memories of that period do you still keep in mind?

"Yes, that was Sergey who later on became my partner in The End Records. It was actually my first encounter with a real metal fan at the college we both went to. We became friends solely based on the fact we both liked metal. Actually after I graduated and moved to LA we still kept contact and it was two years later (1997) that he came to me and we talked about doing the label. Those early years were interesting times, especially for metal as I left from my country where we had a big circle of metal fans and came to San Diego and couldn't meet anyone into this kind of music. What's interesting is that Motocore was scheduled to play 3 times but cancelled all times due to poor sales tickets. After the 3rd time, a local newspaper ran an article on it saying that metal is a pretty much dead movement... those were rough times I guess..."

The label started to function at the beginning of 1998 yet you settled your first contract much earlier, in 1997. I refer to MENTAL HOME, am I right? What were the very reasons that determined you to found this label?

"Yes, Mental Home is what spawned the whole idea for a label and it all started after Sergey came back from Moscow with an advanced tape of their newly recorded album. He called me up and told me he wanted to find ways to help the band get more exposure outside of Russia. The first reaction was to duplicate some copies of the album and send it to some labels and see if anyone is interested. When he came over though, together with Mental Home he also brought a tape of Nokturnal Mortum and also sounded quite impressive! I then pulled a couple of promos of bands I had, those being Sculptured and Odes Of Ecstasy, and we just spent a few hours listening to them. By the end of the day we just decided to start our own label and see how it goes."

You have released, for some time, your first compilation, a very interesting one, while MENTAL HOME was into the first position and received an extraordinary welcome all over the Metal press. Can

you get through, in details, the most important stages of your label development?

"Yes, the first release was January 1998 by Mental Home 'Vale'. That was 6 months after we decided to start the label thus we had a lot work already in place, had a website going, etc. Very importantly we were in touch with 6 bands by then, that all agreed to release albums with us. We knew that our label and our bands were quite unknown and we had to find a way to spread the news. Thus we did a compilation (the cover was based on the designs of our website) and had songs of the albums we wanted to release that year. The next big step was with Nuclear Blast that

world and the same goes with our bands (Greece, Norway, USA, Australia, Russia, Czech, etc...). But 2 things bring us together: love of music and determination to work hard and help the bands grow. I think once we stay focused and keep our integrity we will continue working this out. Metal as a form of music transcends borders and our label also reflects that."

Why did you choose for "The End" name? Is it, somehow, about a hidden message or a pessimistic connotation?

"The name came up pretty quick. It can mean different things to different people and at different occasions. It gives us the flexibility to use that under numerous circumstances. I remember on our first Ad we said: 'Metal? Let It Be The End!' and many people just didn't get it. Also, on the new comp the title is: 'At The End Of Infinity' which is a contradictory statement obviously. It just allows to use it as creative as we want."

What happened between you and NOKTURNAL MORTUM? There were a few rumors relating to some divergences of convictions and concepts that might have led to the end of your collaboration...

"It seems that their ideology kept getting more and more extreme with each release. Sergey was saying it has to do with their situation in Ukraine and it's causing them to turn to that direction. And while I try to keep an open mind it came to the point where it was conflicting with my personal beliefs. We run a music label; not a political institution. We always put the music first but the band wanted to fully promote their ideology as well. As we felt we couldn't do it we mutually agreed not to work together anymore."

Last year meant for you many great accomplishments as you had license rights for diverse European labels such as Massacre, Avantgarde or Prophecy... Where did such policy come from? Until that time you only had a single understanding with Nuclear Blast...not that I do not wish you for more... "Actually, most of our deals are done directly with the bands and not the labels. For example, Green Carnation we got the offer to sign them worldwide but it was too expensive for us and since we don't have a strong presence in Europe we spoke with Prophecy and decided to split the territories and expenses. This allows us to fully concentrate in the US and thus do a much more effective job. At the same time Virgin Black signed with Massacre in Europe and with us in the USA. And with Winds we retain full rights for here as well."

Your alliance with Century Media has become quite famous and this fact might be misinterpreted or regarded in certain terms of your commitment with this big label, as far as their Internet site is concerned. For the present, can you declare the nature of your

The End Records

asked to license Nokturnal Mortum in Europe. Soon after Odes Of Ecstasy also got licensed to Raven Music for Europe. I was also very glad when we managed to get Epoch Of Unlight on tour with Dimmu Borgir and Samael in 1999. Two further developments include the start of our mail-order that really took off which also resulted in adding 2 more people in the company, and the fact that we now have a solid distribution in the USA making our titles available across the country."

I find at least odd and peculiar the fact you come from Cyprus and Serghei from Russia. In the meantime, I heard that another guy (Tomer Pink) joined the team and he is from Israel... Could we know for sure which might be the label's origin, since you gathered from all over the world?

"It is true that we are all from different areas of the

actual partnership?

"Yes, Century Media was my main occupation for around 3 years. The End was very underground at that time so there were no conflict of interests. I have actually moved outside of California recently and I am not involved with CM any longer. Still I keep in touch with them and have a lot of friends over there!"

Let us draw up your last achievements: Sleepless, Green Carnation, Virgin Black, Scholomance, Winds, Arcturus, Agalloch, Antimatter. Please, present us all the details you can about these bands and their albums.

"Ok, here we go:

SLEEPLESS - This is the first band we sign from Israel. Not only I know one of the main members but also their Israeli label, Raven Music. I had their first demo and I was intrigued and then got the album and it was very refreshing and unique. Without being metal, they were able to still create dark moody atmospheres. Their arrangements were quite complex with clean vocals, and a variety of elements from jazz, gothic, ambient, etc...References can be drawn to Ulver, Tiamat, etc.

Green Carnation - I first got an e-mail from Tchort while I was in Cyprus visiting my family. He said he was looking for a label to release his forthcoming album, 'Light Of Day, Day Of Darkness'. I asked him if he was able to send me some demos of the new songs and he said he already booked the studio and needed an answer asap! Thus we went back and forth and he described the whole concept of the album via e-mails! As I was also familiar with the first release, I felt comfortable enough to work with the band. As you know they have delivered an amazing album and for many one of the tops of the year! This was also our first band from Norway.

VIRGIN BLACK - I got a copy of their album from a magazine write, Tom Edmoson for Critical Metal. He said it might fit the style of our label and when I listened to it I was very impressed. They play a style of dark symphonic with gothic and metal elements and it sounded very unique. We were about to sign them

and then I lost my distribution in the USA so things were put on hold. In the meantime, they got a deal with Massacre for Europe. Then after a few months I got a new distribution in the USA so we resumed our prior activities and thus released the album. The band was also quite enthusiastic and gave us the Trance EP to be added as a bonus as well! This is our first signing from Australia.

SCHOLOMANCE - As you know they have been with us since the early days. We released their debut album in 1998 and the new one just this past January. The band has evolved tremendously (even beyond their debut) and with a strong production they gave us killer album. And although more of a death/progressive metal band they are now described as the replacement of Emperor. Maybe it's due to the complexity of the songs and the extensive keyboards.

WINDS - Another great band from Norway. This deal was quite interesting as I first got an e-mail from Avantgarde asking if we want to get the rights for Winds in the USA. Then the same week I got an e-mail from Andy (main composer and keyboard player of the band) asking me where in Pasadena I live. It came out he moved from Norway and now he lives 2

blocks from my house! Thus we met and he played me the album and I was very impressed. They play a unique style of dark progressive metal with amazing guitars, and classical music! I thus contacted Avantgarde immediately and bought the rights for the USA!

ARCTURUS - Is one of my all time favorite bands. They fit so much into the vision of our label which is to create music that is unique, defies categorization and even re-define standards of music. 'La Masquerade Infernale' was a pure masterpiece and a timeless classic. Thus when I found out they are working on a new album we called their label and told them right away that we want the album for the USA. We already had a relationship with them as we buy their titles for our mail-order so they knew we are reliable and professional. It took 4 months to finish the agreement but it's definitely worth it. The 'Sham Mirrors' is truly awesome. Very melodic (especially Garm's vocals) but still with the avant-garde approach that ARCTURUS is know for. And the songs are heavy!! Two of them are just pure black metal and on one Ihsahn from Emperor sings on it. Those that followed ARCTURUS through their career would be quite ecstatic when they receive it.

AGALLOCH - Another band that we have signed in the early days. The new album 'The Mantle' is a huge progression from the debut, more variant and very diverse ranging from folk to black metal and from darkwave to post-rock. Very organic and textured this is a pantheon of emotions and dark melodies. Definitely one of the top US bands to hit the scene



lately. Anyone interested remotely in dark music should check this out.

ANTIMATTER - Well just mentioning that this involves members from Anathema should be enough. Duncan Patterson is responsible for most of Alternative 4, one of the top albums of the 90's so how can we deny his vast talent? Antimatter offers non-metal elements but it's still dark, depressive and suicidal. Sometimes I feel that Duncan creates musical magic with as little words and music possible. 'Saviour' greatness also lies heavily on the very strong vocal performances by all 5 singers. Anyway, this is the new project by Duncan and expect of a lot of great albums in the future!

What can you tell me about the sales of your albums? The best one? The worst one?

"Arcturus is the best selling from the above. Sleepless I believe is the most underrated as it is the most unknown plus their music is very niche. But no one said offering challenging music is an easy task and we will hard to help them to create more awareness."

What surprises do you intend to bring forward this year? Did you discover any young new bands that particularly aroused your interest? What should be the criteria do you guide upon when picking up and grading the bands you sign with?

"We are looking into 1-2 bands but I think we got a lot of great talent to the label already. We are putting all our efforts now into working the new releases we have so we are not actively looking into signing anyone right now. And to sign someone it has to be a band we really like."

But for the next year? I know about Dan Swano's projects and... What is your target regarding of the The End's buyers?

"Yes, Nightingale by Dan Swano. That guy is a legend! The new Nightingale sounds massive with a great production, amazing vocals and very dynamically driven music. Be prepared for a great surprise. About other releases nothing is fully confirmed but we are working with Garm on the new Ulver."

What can you tell me about your agreement with "III Literature"? What are you interested in finding out when you conceive the questions?

"I started writing for Ill Literature in 1996. In the last 2 issues I didn't get to contribute much as I am too busy with The End. But I used to review tons of albums and then interview those bands I liked. Before any interview I would do tons of research and find out as much as possible for the band. I would then prepare 25-30 questions and make sure it covers all

the aspects of the band. I felt it was a responsibility to deliver a well covered story. In the same way a band works hard to create an album, a journalist should put a good effort in bringing forth a good story."

If I am not wrong you are about 30 years old, what is it to be said on the topic of your personality and life? Do you have children? In fact, are you married? What hobbies are fulfilling your life and what musical styles do you select anymore? Are you still listening to Nick Cave, for example?

"Yes, I just turned 30 and I can say that my life so far has been anything but dull as from early on I always pre-occupied myself with various activities. But music has been a big part of my life for almost 20 years

now. I remember growing up and being around when all the great metal albums were coming out and we all had to wait for 'Masters Of Puppets' to be released or 'South Of Heaven', etc. When I now listen to those albums along with the music there is a sense of nostalgia as tons of memories just flood out as well. I still listen to new metal releases but it has to be really good to grasp my attention, for example, the new My Dying Bride or Entombed. But I listen to Nick Cave, New Model Army, Portishead, Alice In Chains and anything that sounds like quality music to my ears. Pink Floyd is still on the top of my list and I listen to all their albums consistently! Besides music I really like to read. History and obscure fiction are my 2 favorite topics. And yes, I am married. No children but we have 2 cats."

I remember that your second compilation booklet enclosed also a detailed history of the label you run. What was its purpose?

"At the time it seemed that people were still not very familiar with the label. We were getting all kinds of questions on the label and our bands. I also saw the comp as the beginning of the second chapter for the

label. The first step was for us to get known and the second step was to get established. Thus I put everything down on the booklet, to clear things up for everybody and be able to move to the next level. It worked well as I got tons of comments on that and people appreciated our honest approach to music."

I am obsessed and haunted by one single aspect of your activity: didn't you face rough times in order to make it through in USA since you were a new-comer, an outlander? Sergey had a similar status as well. Didn't you find resistance and plenty of obstacles when you decided to found and make the label functioning? I have in mind, for example, the account and the banking and so on...

"Let's just say that nothing was ever easy for us. Even when I first came I could barely communicate since my English was quite poor. But going back to the label we had to do everything by ourselves as we had no outside investors or anything like that. We didn't have any industry experience as we were merely fans of the music. I have a degree in international business and Sergey in finance and communications, and now looking back I think that helped set some right structure from early on. We made a bunch of mistakes but our determination kept us going."

It is almost obvious that Metal scene seems to venture away from Black Metal sphere and change sense of direction towards Gothic if not even Progressive ones. Do you think the age of brutality might have come to an end?

"At this point I don't any particular style being quite dominant. There are so many bands doing so many different things that you can find pretty much whatever you want. What I think the scene lacks is progression as very few bands are trying to do something new these days. And this a constant strive for me as I always like to work with bands that try to be unique and true to themselves as artists."

Tell me, what Metal magazines do you periodically read? What such webzines do you visit and, if we came here, what would be the latest news you pleasantly listen to?

"I don't buy any metal magazines anymore since I have tons of magazines sent to me for free. I go through most them at least quickly browsing through to see what's new but rarely read full interviews as

most have ask the same questions and get the same cliché answers. I think the last issue of your magazine was the one I read a bunch of the interviews as you have a different style of interviewing. In regards to websites I check for new mostly and I like digitalmetal.com, musiquemachine.com, metalcrypt, etc. The latest great news was that Dave Lombardo would tour again as the drummer for Slayer and also that Dream Theater plays the complete 'Master Of Puppets' at their shows?!"

I am anxious to know, how do you picture European Metal scene from Bill Gates' continent? Do you see any differences between American Metal stage and the rest? Can you point out, perhaps, any peculiar characteristic feature of the American one?

"Yes, the American scene seems to be still stuck in brutal death metal and also metal-core seems to be getting big. And the Power metal seems to still be growing which makes no sense to me as all that was already done much better before and it already getting old (for the second time) in Europe. And there is a the mainstream metal with the nu-metal crap, but that's a different story not even worth mentioning. The European metal scene seems to be strong but also saturated. One band gets popular and hundreds of new ones come out 'borrowing' that same sound."

If changing the topics, I am not blind not to observe that lately violence left and still does, more often, finger-marks on each corner of the world. How do you feel about that, do you think we are getting close to an imminent end of the world, the Apocalypse? I almost feel the "touch" of a Third War, do you?

"I don't think we are at this point yet. I grew up in Cyprus, where there is always a thread for war so I am kind of used to this feeling. But the terrorist attacks in New York seemed to have a strong impact worldwide, with a lot of aftermath results. It even affected our business as the post-office came to a standstill for a period of time. It is definitely a turning point in history and let's hope the results will turn out to be positive."

Did I miss something? Is there anything else you would feel adding? Tell me, what were your expectations, desires that you wanted to satisfy on the promise land before leaving Cyprus, and which should they be right now?

"I think you covered quite a lot with your extensive questions. As of expectations, those that know me well can tell that I am never satisfied and I always strive for the next development and how to better what we do. When I left Cyprus the plan to study in the US and go back and work there. Things turned out different as my wife got scholarships to further her studies so I had to accommodate as well. The End started mostly as a hobby and an excitement to help some bands we liked. We have now realized that things got serious so our goal is not to help bands but also work with them and help them get more developed in the music scene."

I do thank you, my friend, for the time and I wish you for the best to happen in the future. Still..., how do you breathe the air of a continent that was discovered only two centuries ago in spite of the fact you came from a land with thousands years of history? Did you confront huge differences of cultures, civilizations? As a note of farewell, what would you recommend for visiting in USA, what about Cyprus? All good regards...

"Thank you very much and I hope I gave adequate answers to your extensive questions. Now, living in the USA is something I am quite accustomed too and although it is a new discovered continent its nature is as old as any place. I went to Grand Canyon last year and just seen that was quite breathtaking. But again it was amusing when I went to San Francisco and were claiming that the city boasted the oldest building in the state which was built sometime in the 1700s. On a day-to-day basis, I am used to deal with all kinds of people with different backgrounds and customs. Even at my school there were students from 84 countries. In regards to visiting the USA, besides CA I have been to Phoenix, Las Vegas and New York. I still like CA the best as the climate at least is calm and reminds me more of home. I just move to Salt Lake and so far I like it. Different than CA but the nature is more striking here. About visiting Cyprus you should be able to see pretty much the whole island in 2-3 days as it is quite a small place!"

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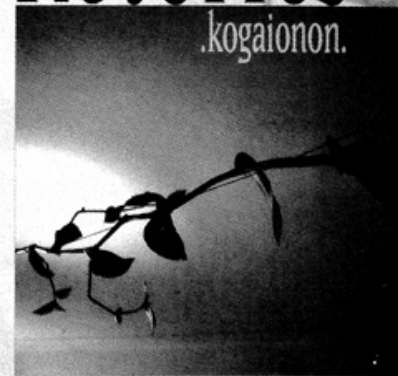


In the last few days I have been thinking over and over about what it would be best to do, either to give up whatever it is that brought me right here and to follow the same current course of my regular normal life, or simply to continue stealing from all dear people's personal time just in order to satisfy my own "hunger"?! I wished I had an answer, but I am afraid my cowardice creates for me a certain comfort of not dramatizing everything...or, in better words, it is a confident comfort of hiding away, even from myself, my own personal fear to decide.

Since I ever remember, I enjoyed constructing the false impression that I always shirked and I got out of no matter which situation...I plainly took pleasure in placing the blame on the lack of maturity, on shallowness and the classical "I did not know...I did not imagine that..." or terms like "que sara, sara/whatever will be, will be" and "it is possible either or...". Hazard, inspiration, flair, just luck or fortune and sense were very soon a few guiding marks I directed and conducted my "evolution" upon. Although I was aware madness is extremely dangerous, I used to enjoy believing that it was a controlled one (exactly as our Physics teacher told us about electric current) and its purpose ought to be to preserve me from extremes. Good friends of mine believed and even trusted this madness of mine, perhaps higher than me, and were captivated, thrilled of what I showed, told, presented or imposed to them. Some of them succeeded to liberate themselves from that obsessive hopeless madness of mine but they had to step ahead, the most important step: to settle their own priorities and to suppress all unsafe outbursts. There were as well and as always exceptions and these are the most oppressive and overwhelming burdens for me. Why so?! Simpler than ever, just because I experience the feeling of being the moral culprit of their existence and because I injected them a frame of my psychosis! The most painful aspect is that they did have the courage of decision...and their choice estranged me from them. I am rather confused, either I was that persuasive or they too weak so that to idolize and submit my madness. I still deceive myself /lie? telling me convincing me it was their destiny. As long as you are not aware or determined in what is it that you really want yet you do know what you ought not to do, I guess it is fair for you to take a look in the mirror and say to yourself : "it is time for me to make up my mind!" Well, I did not take such responsibility...and I assume neither in the approximate future shall I take it. What was in it for me?! There were different appetizing universes...and I gained an exacerbated egocentrism as well as a certain satisfaction of nothing never ending... a feeling of still lasting, not yet finished..., moreover, I confirm with stubbornness that the agony shall last for good...until the end of time. Of course, it depends on each person life style and on the corridor which destiny struggles to create for each of us. The consequences?!? Well, most of the few "genuine" I lost, the rest have destroyed themselves deliberately while the others consider that life, here on earth, is nothing but a painful prelude opening the eternity which shall come. As a conclusion, I really do not believe it is possible for someone to accept a transitory state, although I must confess the experience of such is fantastical! I assume you have to take a risk or to cope with reality that you build with your bare hands. You cannot play with madness unless you treat it with indifference. I do not think I chose such approach but neither did I cross into the other side. And, curiously or not, I still am alive...yet... There is one single stranger for me to disclose to you yet which might drive you to the point of reading once again the paragraph and so you start question yourself if I am wrong and where or where do you place yourself . My madness? Didn't you realize, my friend? It is one of the fewest drugs without which our existence would definitely and irremediably be insipid: MUSIC! (25.02.2002)

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VOKODLOK

Interview



There is a new band on Romanian territory, a fashionable one maybe? We will see inside the following short discussion with Gardrak (Andrei), the guitarist of the band.

Hello Andrei. You've just finished the recording of your debut. Are you satisfied with it?

"Ave! Yeah, we are satisfied about the final result. Anyway there are a lot of things that might have been sounded better, but we tried to do the best we could with less money. So we recorded the drum parts in Taboo Studio and the other instruments and mixing and mastering in Dreamcast Studio."

Your sound follows the Raw Primitive Black Metal way, without keys or any other modern atmospheric ingredients: cold Heavy riffs, morbid and demonic voices, crushing drums. Why? Isn't a kind of limitation?

"Our style is skull-crushing Raw Black Metal, this is what we feel and like best... And we don't think this is limiting. We think this is the purpose in Raw Black Metal, to create brutal heavy riffs, demonic screams and morbid feelings. I mean that every style has its own limitations; Death Metal, for example, uses powerful and low guitars, earthquake voices, and if it crosses over these limitations it gets in another style, for example Black/Death Metal... and so on."

I listened to two tracks from your new album and I must admit your music is very furious, fast and aggressive. It's a mixture between old MAYHEM, DARKTHRONE.... It's more a Norwegian sound than a Romanian one. Am I wrong? What does originality mean for VOKODLOK?

"Well, it's natural wanting to sound like something good and not sound shitty like our Romanian sound... And these are the bands that started all this feelings, furious and aggressive, and inspired us since the beginning. For us originality means, in Black Metal, to create new and depressive moods for the listener, without copying other bands songs and riffs, like many local bands (not only in Black Metal) do nowadays and finally sounding more like cover-bands. I admit it's hard, at the beginning, to create something very original, so you must start from some other's band style, and I say style, not playing almost the same songs, but in time you earn experience and you can develop a style of your own."

Let me know more details about your debut, about tracks, about cover, texts...

"The songs, generally, speak about one of the eternal things in life, which is certain and cannot be avoided: Death. But taken separately, the songs speak about different things: 'Decay', is about the hatred against the glorification of god, 'Names on the Pyre', about the disgust against the religious inquisition in The Middle Ages, 'Silent Disturbance', about the destruction that man is capable against his own life, 'Infinite Path of Unreality' is about death and what may come after it, 'Tormenting Spirit' is about vengeance, 'Conjurer of Suffocation' speaks about the inner beast and the fear of unleashing it."

What can you tell me about your deal with Beauty Of Pain? It's a young label, are you satisfied with Alex's work?

"Our collaboration with Beauty of Pain Productions

began with our demo, that Alex released it on CD and he distributed and promoted it very well, mostly abroad but also in our country, so we both, being at the beginning, decided to help each other..."

'Unchain The Wolf' was your demo, very-well received in Romania and not only. But I saw no major differences between the old and new sound. The only remarkable change is the actual synchronism and the quality of interpretation. Can you offer me more details about this issue, please?

"There are two important issues that we must discuss here: the quality of the sound and the conception of the songs. Anyway, I believe that the production of the album is far away superior than the demos sound, with a clearer sound and much powerful atmosphere. And about the conception of the songs, we really are going on the same way we did on demo, but with a little more complex, fast and aggressive riffs... This is the way we feel to play..."

Vokodlok is an old Romanian word, which means werewolf (vukodlak). Isn't it a pompous name with a



possible Dracula-inspiration? Transylvania, Romania, Vlad Dracul/Vlad Tepes, Bram Stoker's tale... What is the band's concept and which is the link between the name and the Black Metal...

"Well, this subject, the werewolf, is pretty much used in many Hollywoodian movies as they did with Vlad Tepes, that has nothing to do with Dracula as they are trying to make people believe... And we don't give a damn about these movies, which the only purpose producers are trying to achieve is to make as much money as their fat asses can contain..."

We wanted be represented by a symbol that could describe the ferocious, the bloody and the morbidity of our style..."

Otherwise, Andrei, what means Black Metal for you? "Black Metal is the supreme method of revealing the mad and the destroying force that has its lair in our minds..."

Make-up, an old trend, is interesting for you nowadays. Why? Do you have any connection with these territories?

"Make-up is still a trend... We see it as a ritual of Black Metal bands... Trying to revive the old warriors feeling before a battle... But we only use it in pictures and not in concerts because of the fact that it is a

trend..."

'Mass Murder Genesis' is a strange name for Black Metal texts. I know you are not Satanist, but why did you hate Christianity? You are living in an Orthodox country, with acceptable Christian laws. Do you consider yourself a rebel of it?

"First, we are neither Satanists nor Christians ... we are simply atheists... We are much angry on Christianity because of the methods they used trying to be the only religion and to obtain adepts, instead of the free will of the every person... Murder and fear are just a few of these methods. And a think it's obvious who did most murders, the Satanists or Christianity to achieve their purposes, but both of them does crimes in the name of Satan or God. Another reason is that I see religion only as a form of politics that tried with the fear of god, to rule the world... And, as one of our great philosophers Emil Cioran said, the saints were only some electoral agents that tried and succeeded to convince people about their 'politic' program. And of course, if you don't agree with some laws you become a rebel, but nowadays when a lot of people are getting there eyes opened it is already a common thing. Anyway, Christianity is not the only subject which is inspiring our songs..."

Your nick-names are Strigoii, Blestemat, Freak, Gardrak. What does it mean and why did you give up your real names? It's a scenic one, maybe?

"Yes, these are scenic names but we didn't leave our real names... me for example I'm using my name on this album... on the next one I'll use another nickname maybe, it depend of our moods..."

You fired your drummer and replaced with Teodor (Freak). Why?

"We had reasons, of course... The first one was the disinterest of evolving; the lack of participation and not in the last places his skills... Teodor was a friend of us, at that time he played in another band, we borrowed him and then he became a permanent member."

You are a Medicine student and so is your brother, Blestemat, too. Could we expect a possible carnage, an experiment with animal-dissection or some things like this, he, he? Only in Black Metal name? What do you think about this kind of idiots who make sacrifices "in the name of ..."?

"Hey, why dissection animals and not humans, he, he, (just joking)... In our first year of study we had to cut in some dead human bodies, but only in the name of science!!!

Of course it is stupid to kill those little cute, fluffy, friendly sweet animals, like cats, pigs and cows, he, he... But most of these bands take these animals already sliced from slaughter houses... Maybe you could expect one tooth extraction live, on stage... (ugly idea, you can try but who is the victim, a possible VOKODLOK's fan?-ed)"

Describe me the band members, the hobbies, the age...

"Well... We all like to listen to Metal, and not only Black-Metal bands, when we have time, 'cause me and my brother for example are busy with our shitty

medicine study, and the others have jobs, we all are between 21 and 24 years... Computers, shitting, reading and drinking..."

OCCULTA is a project of your vocalist. Do you have news regarding this band, maybe?

"This is a two member band, it is only a studio project and it performs Satanic Black Metal... They recorded and will release shortly (January) their demo called 'Hymns to the Fallen Angel' on a split tape, along a Greek band called 'Unholy Archangel', released by Axa Valaha Productions."

What does the future mean for you? Musically and not only...

"We are trying to improve our musical experience by playing at as many concerts as we permit, in Romania and abroad, compose new songs and trying to help the Romanian Underground get to a higher level, as other European countries have, maybe organize some concerts and edit an Underground Magazine (very good idea, try to put in practice soon!-ed)... And the not musically part is to try to get rid of the military service and try to survive the Romania's economical shit that buries a lot of its people."

Thanks for the dialogue and good luck! I saw in an interview that you sustain and support the church burnings... Why? Do you see a solution by this kind of childish action, maybe?

"Well, this is the nostalgia about the beginning of the Black Metal movement, which used barbarian methods, to make their message clear... Of course nowadays it is a childish action and this is not the method to fight this plague... Thanks for the interview... Hails to all..."

November, 2002

K O G A I O N O N



Dekalog / a different kind of..

- I ...to wait for... just for the sake of waiting, no matter what!
- II ...to wait for...anything, no matter what it is!
- III ...in exchange of that, NOT to remember everything...only remembrances that can help you live the present-today are desirable!
- IV ...not to ever count up time elapsing!
- V ...not to ever forget that any waiting is just temporal and provisional...even if it is about a life time!
- VI ...to keep repeating: there is no void... it is only about our inaptness

- to fill the emptiness surrounding us...!
- VII ...not to place together God and prayer...as prayer is sometimes a method to look for hope especially for the one who dares not to hope by himself!
- VIII ... not to let yourself induced into a state of being aware that you have nothing else better to do but to hope...or that you actually desperately try to avoid any consequence of not doing anything at all!
- IX ... to bless any opportunity that you have to share your inner entity

solely with yourself alone...solitude is a hore never complaining or accusing you of selfishness!
X ... to remember that Paradise almost certainly, was located into a cave...if not actually a cave by all means!

Octavian Paler "Viata pe un peron"/ "Life on a railway platform"

PENITENT

Interview



This very last interview was the consequence of a sudden decision made only two days before the New Year due to one single major factor: I actually had the opportunity to talk in person with Karsten Hamre. Moreover it happened that we walked together for a few serious miles as we had the same road for a couple of hours. In other words, Karsten left Stavanger/Norway a couple of months ago and I honestly believe the time of return is solely a matter of providence. So, after some exciting adventures in the south of Romania, maybe not all of them fortunate, finally Karsten arrived in my birth town, Suceava...and here we are exchanging opinions...

Ciao, my friend and welcome on Romanian ground. As I see how things are going, I have one rather impertinent question just on the top of my tongue like: when do you think we'll actually perform an interview directly in Romanian language? I guess here from there is just a step for you to apply for Romanian citizenship... I also understood you gave up Scandinavian cigarettes ("Prince") in the favour of autochthon ones ("Viceroy") while Romanian beer, "Bergerbier" actually is pretty familiar to you...

"To be honest I have no idea when we would be able to perform an interview directly in Romanian language. Time will tell. Maybe next year or the year after, who knows. Yeah I gave up Scandinavian cigarettes in favour of Viceroy, but lately I switched to Winston (Red). Though I have had the opportunity to try the Carpati cigarettes, but those are not what one could call good cigarettes. "Bergerbier" as well as Ursus are among my beer of choices."

Many might ask what in the world Karsten Hamre is doing or looking for exactly in Romania and why is he here for over two consecutive months. Can you make light on this issue?

"Mainly I have had the opportunity to work on more music as well as the possibility to get in contact with other musicians who have more or less similar ideas as me when it comes to music."

Of course, I cannot help but asking if you liked Romania...How do you find my country so far? What exactly did you visit until arriving in Bucovina?

"I do like Romania. Well until arriving in Bucovina the most interesting place I visited was Baia de Fier."

Tell me, right after your pilgrimage at Bucovinean monasteries, especially Putna, do you believe there is any shade of a possibility for Orthodoxy to mark in a way or another a Norwegian... maybe even a Viking, he, he? I understood you were quite fascinated by architectural lines...

"As for the religious part I don't have much to say really. I must say I do not really fully understand the orthodox way of worshiping icons etc. Though on the other hand it is quite right that I was fascinated by the architectural sides of the monasteries. Also the way the

you "reformed" yourself and detached from any of this..., what about this moment? Is it different?

"I don't think it would be right to say I was born Baptist. Norway's official religion is Lutheran Christianity, and I as most Norwegians were baptised in the Norwegian church (sorry, it was my mistake). When I grew older and had the possibility to make my own choices I took the necessary steps in order to no longer be registered/listed as part of the Norwegian Church. When that was done I later became a member of the Humanistic Society. I

believe in the human being, not in any specific god."

There are rumours that say you are about to move in Iasi where great plans of composing are to be fulfilled...a marriage is on that list as well and thus there will be descendants and so your four musical projects shall definitely meet continuance... At the age of 31 I believe it is time for mature facts as well, don't you think? he, he...Am I wrong? Where? What do you wish for this New Year to bring?

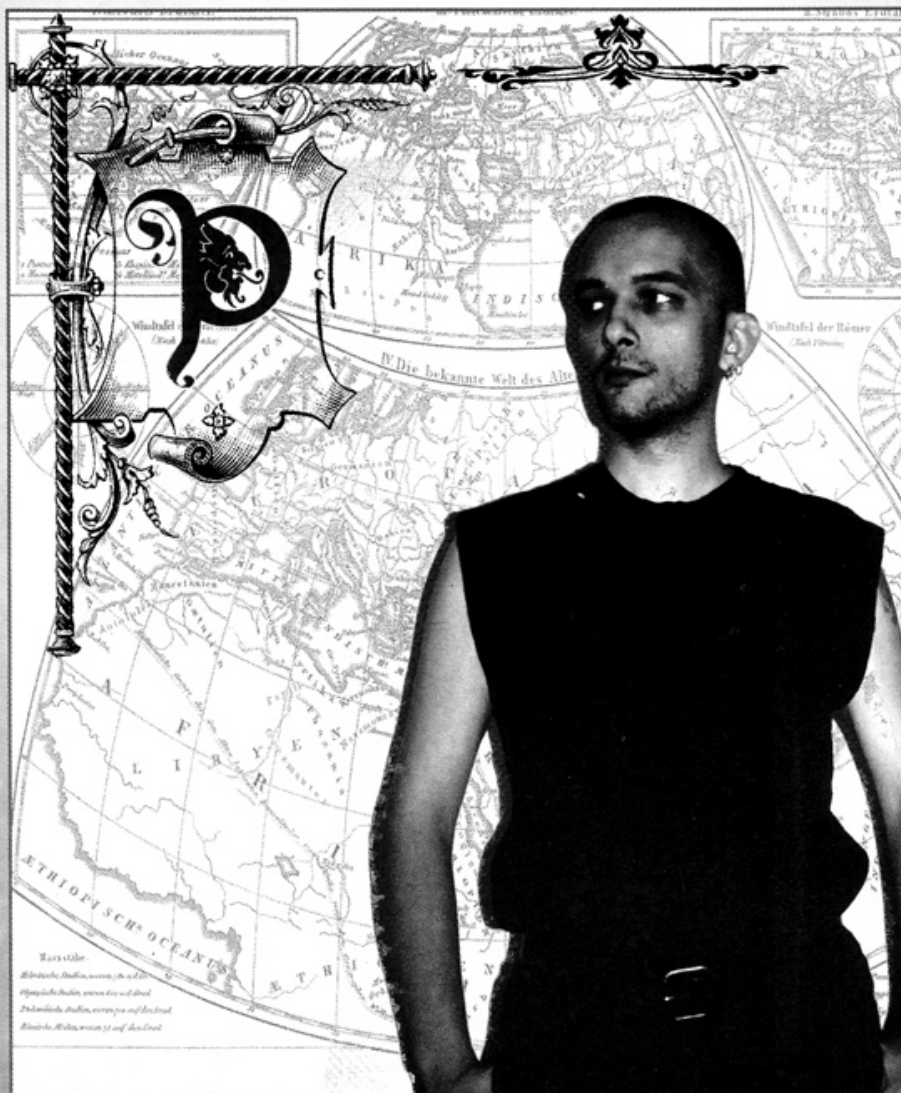
"It's true that I am about to move to Iasi, where I definitely will be working on music together with a few musicians I have met here in Romania. I guess that the older one gets the more it is important to find one's place in life, or have some definite plans on what to do. I guess I still am of the opinion that it is hard to predict the future so I rather take a step at the time, and deal with the present instead of being lost in what the future might bring. As for the marriage, who knows? Maybe sooner or later than you expect!"

Let's move towards music!

It is a little weird, Penitent is either dead or still alive...but in times when no one expects... Beyond Productions affirms that band never ceased to be. What is the truth?

"As I signed a two album deal with Beyond Productions there will be at least one more album. After that I'll see if there's reason to continue with Penitent or not."

Last Penitent album was released with quite a delay since Ars Metallii honoured not the contract,



monasteries are decorated inside, with its paintings of saints etc are really nice, and one should not forget to mention the landscapes that surrounds some of the monasteries, and then especially the monastery that is located somewhat 7km from the border of Ukraine (the most northern monastery in Romania)."

If we finally came to religion issues, what can you tell me about yours? What about your belief? Did you change over the years, in a way or another, as far as religious aspects are regarded? You were born Baptist;

moreover lost as well some money. What did actually happen? How did you come to sign with the Italian label?

"Basically Ars Metalli did not keep their part of the contract when they did not manage to release the album within the time schedule that the contract had. So when six months had passed since Ars Metalli were supposed to release the album I decided to get in touch with other labels. An Italian friend of mine suggested I should send a copy of the album to Beyond Prod. and so I did. After a short time Beyond responded and we started to discuss the details of a contract. The contract for two albums were signed and now the album has been released."

Can you tell me something regarding the feedback next to this last album? I'd rather say Devil Doll in a Norwegian version; am I wrong?

"The feedback on this album has been more or less positive. There are of course people who do not like, but those seem to be more caught up in how Penitent sounded before and I guess they want Penitent to continue in the old way. I wouldn't go as far as saying the last album is Devil Doll in a Norwegian version, though I do agree that there are songs who have quite a few similarities with Devil Doll."

Dense Vision Shrine enjoyed an elegant debut at the British label. Are you pleased and satisfied with the

result? When do you plan for another material to come out?

"I am very satisfied with the result of the first Dense Vision Shrine album. It also pleases me to see that there are a lot of people finding it interesting and enjoyable. New material could be released sometime this year. Unfortunately I cannot say what part of the year."

Veiled Allusions and Arcane Art bring for the New Year two albums released at the American label Dragon Flight. Please, give me all details (you actually can) regarding these two materials.

"The instrumental full length version of Arcane Art 'KritaRan' will be released this month, January 2003. In March there should be the Veiled Allusions double CD 'The Art of Dying/Visions of the World'. The first disc here, 'The Art of Dying', is brand new material while the second disc 'Visions of the world' is a re-issue of the debut album."

I wish for success with your time-honoured projects! I also understood you intended to play in a Romanian Epic Black Metal band. How would it be like?

"If it will be 100% Epic Black Metal is yet to be seen. I guess it will be a mixture of various metal forms, not only one. How it will be in the end is impossible to say right now, but if all goes well we will be recording a

demo/promo before summer."

How did you spend the New Year? Especially since you were in Romania.....

"I was at a party with good friends." (In Roman city-ed)

Karsten, I assume it is time to end this conversation. I believe and really hope you felt secured and fine in my car and I also hope you enjoyed the music you had the opportunity to listen to during our journey...I really trust that "my music" (Winds, Agalloch, Tenhi) didn't bother you... Well, I wish for you to come to record at least one album in Ljubljana/Slovenia studio... you know... Mr. Doctor... One single detail: what is LIFE for Karsten Hamre? How would you define it? Which might be its limits?

"Thanks for this rather unusual interview, especially the first part of it hehe. The trip in your car was pleasant and of course I felt secure, after all the car wasn't a Trabant... Listening to good music, as the music of the bands you mentioned, always makes a car ride pleasant. I also hope that I one day will be able to record an album in Ljubljana, or in Tivoli Studios with Jurij Toni as Engineer/producer. What is life? Life is like a box of chocolate, you never know what you're gonna get."

January 2003.



WINDS



Interview

If I give a real thought to this issue, I believe there are indeed very few bands to fascinate me. Perhaps these days have brought me an answer closer to the heart and maybe just the most appropriate one for the mood I am in: WINDS.

Although the album really pleased me in February, I must confess I wasn't so excited and enthusiast about it. Well, I guess it took some full months to realize "Reflection of the I" is a masterpiece and the only reference I could use right now, coming deep inside my heart from, would be the maximum one!

This sample of Innovative Emotional Dark Progressive Metal hit me just inside my soul so that I do my best to be coherent and lucid as needed in order to enter WINDS world, having as guiding light the person who actually set the "foundations" for this band, somewhere around 1998.

Ciao, Andy and let's hope I found you in a state of mind closer to what we may call it "discussion". Do you think that your music description might be a little pompous? Do you think I wasn't sane enough to describe your band/music in such terms?

"There are two things I seem to read in the press about this release. One is that it's an album you need time with in order to fully understand and appreciate, and two, that many people, having listened to it for a while, are now viewing it as a masterpiece and even their favorite album of the year. It's a demanding album for sure, and I'm not saying this to proclaim ourselves as being

better than anyone else, but I think the bottom line is that this is an album that either speaks to you in the most profound way a piece of music ever could, or completely the opposite for those who don't understand it. There is no doubt that it takes time to get into this music, and many will probably never see the greatness in it, as they don't take the time to explore it carefully enough. So in a way we've accomplished what we wanted, to create something that doesn't necessarily have a lot of followers with a short attention span, but rather having built a foundation for something that will last for a long time. I think our followers are probably more dedicated than the average metal fan, which is something we appreciate very much."

Last time we talked, I guess it was in the Winter, right after you released the album...., tell me what happened in between?

"There has been a lot going on. We've been working

on new material almost since immediately after we recorded the album a year and a half ago, so we have material ready now for yet another album, and we've even recorded drums for it this summer. And I'm telling you this is going to be incredible, far superior to anything we've ever done, and that should speak volumes since Reflections... has received top scores in almost all reviews. We are still working on arrangements for the new album, there will be 12 tracks in total, and I anticipate a release sometime in the fall of 2003. We always think long term with WINDS, that's just how we do it, but we're not in a hurry and we like to take our time ensuring that the result will be no less than phenomenal."

And now, entering WINDS dimension.... or in other words, let's explore the universe of one planet where the explosion has just happened (Travis Smith' cover!) or maybe it is about your musical reflection spread out in the fourth cardinal points, guided by the symbolic force of artistic wings: Andy, Jan Axel, Carl and Lars. Where from does WINDS come? From which "inside" or insight?



"I can't even describe WINDS as what it is beyond us writing as honest and deeply profound music from our minds and souls that we can. The concept is that of everything and nothing at all, imperative and irrelevant all at the same time. It is just a small voice in the universe, something that cannot be described in words. It's a search for perfection, something beautiful beyond time and space. It's darkness and light, and everything in between."

If we talk about WINDS music, we notice classical elements and neo-classic right in harmony with symphonic waves and acoustic parts, guitar solos or jazz shadows. And all is sheltered by a Dark Progressive background of an exquisite beauty while Metal is solely the only palpable mark which can be scanned by my ears. Why did we have to wait so long for WINDS to open a dimension and direction for a new style in today's music?

"I think you just said everything we could ever hope

to hear, and it's very humbling that you think we've opened a new dimension in music. We appreciate hearing that very much, and we feel we've worked very hard to deliver something out of the ordinary, so it's even more rewarding when we're reassured of that fact. I don't know why it happened when it did, it was more or less just a coincidence I think, but WINDS has now become an important part of our lives, and we feel we owe it to ourselves to keep exploring this even further as we continue to develop and grow as musicians."

Perhaps because the piano, violin, cello (in fact the entire philharmonic orchestra...) seems not to be quite enough...here come Lars' and Drajevolitch' voices to surround the entire atmosphere into a mysterious aura so that what WINDS emanates is just a measurement of stunning rhythms created by Jan Axel's battery. I have a curiosity, why does the voice of ESPERANZA, MICRONIQUE or SOUL SELECTOR feature only as a guest presence? He participated in this very album, as well as in "Of Entity and Mind" MCD. There can be only four cardinal points...right? I find his input as far as WINDS music is regarded at least as serious as of any other member...or maybe this is an outside view...can you comment it?

"He will also continue to work with us in the future, but to a lesser degree because of his shifted priority towards further development of his own projects. WINDS is not and was never his main focus, and I respect that completely as his musical interests lie elsewhere. He will still remain a very close friend. As far as creative input he was never as involved as the other members are, so it was per his own request and under a mutual agreement that he was only credited as a guest. I would agree entirely with your view apart from this, and in my eyes he is a very important part of WINDS, one that won't fade away but will remain the same."

It was a rumor, some time ago, that you desired for WINDS' vocals to be featured by Mike/OPETH. What stopped you? In fact, was it just a rumor or not, what is the true part? I even understood that, at live performance, you gave him a CD with your music, but it seems like something went differently...

"This was not a rumor, as it was actually true. But to clarify, I invited him to do a guest performance, I never intended him to be the main singer in WINDS. I wrote to him before we recorded Reflections... and he emailed me back saying he was too busy to do it at the time, because Opeth was going on tour. About a year later he emailed me asking if the album was out, and that he wanted to hear it, but I haven't heard anything more from him since then."

Let us begin with all required introductions of your

team: the first of all is the one with whom you settled the band, Jan Axel von Blomberg, well known as Hellhammer and perhaps the best drummer worldwide at this time. I might exaggerate...but I am sure you'll correct me, won't you? His activity in bands like THE KOVENANT, MAYHEM or ARCTURUS finally the brought him two Grammy awards and quite a fame. How is it to work with him? "He's the nicest person you could ever know, very courteous, easy to work with, very professional, very creative, and also an excellent drummer as you point out. We also have many things in common, for example an interest for cooking and a passion for food, so there's always something to talk about with him."

Lars Eric is a very gifted musician and an exceptional vocalist. His work was awarded with a Grammy for the Industrial project SENA ANIMA. I know you quite liked him much from the times he performed in JACK IN THE BOX. I understood he faced some divergences regarding his participation in Khold...therefore Lars is concentrated even more on WINDS. Why did you choose for him to join you? Moreover, the bass parts, on this album, belong to him as well, am I right? How so?

"To start with the latter, he took over the bass after WINDS was transformed from a project to a band. Carl, Lars and myself were all potential replacements for the bass instrument, but in the end we decided to let Lars have the job since first of all he is the most rooted bass player among the three of us, and secondly because he also did a lot of work with the string arrangements, so it made sense to have him arrange the bass parts to best fit in with the rest of the music. As far as his involvement in Khold, that was something I never understood, as I can't imagine that being a band that had much to offer him on a musical level, no offence to the guys from Khold. He's not involved with either of those bands anymore, but you will see him in a few other projects that might come as a surprise to many."

The last one in line was Carl Augustus Tidemann a fine guitar player very famous due to his alliances and kind of partnerships with bands such as TRITONUS, FLEURETY or ARCTURUS.

How does he regard your music from is certain point of view namely a Progressive Metal disciple? Why him and not somebody else? For example...why not Satyr?

"While we're making apologies, no offence to Satyr either, but Carl is about 100 times as good of a guitar player as Satyr will ever be. Carl also has a far stronger musical personality than any other guitarist in any black metal band, period. It's very evident that aside from myself, Carl is the most influential person in the developing of new WINDS material. There were always progressive elements there even before Carl became an active contributor in the songwriting, but this was a natural and logical path for WINDS to take the step to the next level. Carl and I compliment each other very well musically, him being very progressive minded and myself being very classical minded. Because that is in one way what WINDS is, a mix between the classical and the progressive."

On the first material also featured other two musicians but later on you fired them both. Weren't they at your technical level...or you are perhaps a little too egoistical and conceited?

"I'm sure I can be both arrogant and self-important at times, but when asking myself honestly at the time, what is best for WINDS, and if you ask any other member of WINDS if we were better served without their involvement, you will not get any objections from anyone. That has nothing to do with the quality or lack thereof in those musicians, as this was a practical decision made by the rest of the band after the first recording. Lars had expressed a desire to take over the bass duties, and Carl wanted to do all the guitars. Jan Axel and myself didn't have any objections to that, and it also works much better with fewer people involved, as that only improves the efficiency of communication between the involved members. At the time when these guys were involved WINDS was only in the project stage, and so nobody were really fired per say, we just decided not to include them, and we didn't invite them to the next recording session."

How can you explain and comment the fact that a band with no name received so fast Roberto's (AVANTGARDE) offer? Do you think he balanced more your names (of course, the fame behind) or/and the music itself as well had a strong argument?

"I don't really know, as I didn't have any established communication with Roberto at the time. I think it might have been a combination, because Jan Axel presented him with the material, and when he realized he really liked it too, I'm sure that was what made him decide. Jan Axel called me up and said that he had taken care of finding a label, so then it was settled and we signed the deal pretty much as they offered it."

address very close to his. So he sent me an email, and we arranged a meeting. I had not heard much about his label before, but he gave me a pretty good idea, and I played our material for him. Meanwhile I had been talking with Roberto about finding a label in the US who could concentrate on the release there, and we'd been over a few options but not found anything we felt confident about. So after Andreas expressed interest in releasing our album, I mentioned this to Avantgarde, and then they got in touch between the two of them, and made an agreement. Instead of a licensing deal, The End bought the rights to the US. I have a very close relationship with The End now and we could not ask for a better label in the US. Andreas and I have also become personal friends, and I've helped out a few times by doing things for his label."

If we came here, to your leaving Europe, can you tell me which were the reasons determining you to move away from Norway?

"Those were mainly due to personal reasons not related to WINDS in any way. It was a choice that I made based on a situation I was in, where I had the choice to either stay or go, and I decided to go."

And now...let's talk about you: attracted to classical music...have studied piano in your childhood and thus became a very talented (naturally gifted as well) musician. Keyboard seems to be the perfect instrument for you to communicate with the realm of music and I must say that lyrics harmoniously tie as an ideal perfect bridge these two worlds. Where this irresistible love for music and passion for instruments comes from? Definitely from your childhood...but which are the inner motivations?

"This is a difficult question to answer since most of the time I'm not conscious of where the inspiration comes from. More than anything I'm just inspired to write music, being on one instrument or another. I just started my musical training on piano since this was a tradition in my family, but I don't view myself as an instrumentalist that much. I just write music, with passion."

Tell me, would you like to be a writer more than you actually already are? I wonder which might be the source of such huge desire to compose lyrics. Moreover, can you

speaking about a split personality?

"I have sometimes had a desire to become a writer, but this is very challenging to me, much more so than the music is, even though I always feel I have room for a lot of involvement in both. The difference is that music comes to me fast most of the time, but lyrics do, more often than not, take a lot of effort. Sometimes it's very difficult to write, and I was very impressed with myself that I actually managed to complete the lyrics for the album. It's not always about a means to an end for me, but the process during which something is created. I must also say I was totally blown away after taking a step back and reading through everything, by how well those lyrics turned out. It's definitely the best thing I've ever written. It was also funny how I came up with the titles for the songs. All the lyrics were written, but none of the songs had names yet. One morning during the time while we were in the studio, I just woke up and started writing frantically, and I wrote down a lot of names on a piece of paper. Somehow it all made sense. I



As far as license for America was concerned...things were perhaps clearer. Andreas told me (in an interview included as well in this issue of "Kogaionon") he was contacted by Roberto specifically for an agreement between labels and, in the same time, you contacted him as you has just moved from Europe, right beside him, at two or three blocks away. How does it seem and actually is the relationship you have with The End Records?.....have you noticed how many things I managed to know??? (Of course..., my vanity speak for itself! ha, ha!)

"You are extremely well informed I must say, but that only makes it more pleasant as you seem to take a special interest in your work. I like it when interviewers do research, and don't just ask the same questions to everyone. Anyway, this was pretty accurate, although this time I do have to correct you on a few details. Andreas at The End was actually the one who got in touch with me, as he saw I had an

wrote the 11 song titles right there and then, and they remained unaltered on the finished version of the album. I don't think I've ever told this story before, so there's something unique you can view as a reward for your extensive preparation."

AGE OF SILENCE is a different project that, until one of those days, was kept pretty secret...top secret I'd say. I understood you still didn't agree to speak about it but what if I trick you and ask you why did you choose for Jan Axel in this project as well?

"Basically he says everything I do he will participate on. And I said, well at least you have to hear the material first, but he said no, if you wrote it then I know it's good. So that was a pretty good vote of confidence right there, I must say. The reason why I've kept this very secret is because many of the involvements have not yet been confirmed, and they still aren't, but very soon now it will be revealed."

You signed with a label, which I assume it is more or less yours. Vocals are to be performed by somebody who didn't play for quite some time now...but who is a strong name...a famous one. Don't you think it is time for more details?

"I'm sure it won't hurt if I reveal that I've signed this project to The End for two albums, solely based on the material I presented to Andreas at an early demo stage."

A real fusion of styles, from Thrash, Rock and Electronic to Jazz or classical music shall definitely

parallels in the mood of the music. If some want to insist on this similarity then that's fine by me, but the musicians who played and wrote the music for those respective bands strongly disagree with that point of view. There is no competition, if anything the coincided release date was decided upon so that each band could help the other by creating more exposure. Two great releases on the same day headlines were featured everywhere, so I believe this had its desired effect. But it was a coincidence that both albums were finished almost at the same time. ARCTURUS won't play live as far as I know, I've even been told directly from members that the band has called it quits, but then I've heard people say the opposite, so maybe this is a publicity thing as well. I don't think we should exclude anything at this point as far as a new ARCTURUS release, but a live show with them is unthinkable. WINDS might do shows in the future sometime, but there are no plans yet, and there probably won't be for a while."

Maybe I am wrong...but you seem to be a very organic band. So, why do you use natural instruments, couldn't you replace, for example, the sound of a violin with some keyboard effects?

"We use organic instruments because there is just more expression in a real instrument. It simply sounds better for what we are trying to do."

I understood three of you are married and one even has children. How is your life when we don't speak about music?

Winds

mark a whole new experience for you. I need to know, what is the difference between WINDS and this new band?

"This project will be a lot heavier than WINDS, and also more basic, not as multi-layer arranged, but more focused on different expressions between the tracks. There will be artificial sounds and elements that are not featured in WINDS, and there won't be any live strings or any typically classically inspired themes as there are in WINDS. There will be more sporadic mixing of different elements from different genres."

I do wish for all good luck as far as AGE OF SILENCE is concerned and I tell you now...I cannot wait for the moment to write about the debut album. Back to WINDS...Let's see..., the coincidence upon the data of releasing albums besides ex/present ARCTURUS members plainly conducts to a situation of a permanent comparison between each other. Do you think we might get paranoiac and affirm there is a competition between? What do you think of ARCTURUS' musical approach? Have you ever imagined how it would be to perform live besides them? I guess Jan Axel would keep his place while the other three would have to step up on stage. Do you believe there is any connection between both bands? And since we are here...when do you plan for a WINDS live performance?

"I have pretty much dismissed any similarities between WINDS and ARCTURUS except for nominal

"You really know a lot don't you. Yes its true, Carl, Jan Axel and myself are married. We're all really busy in our personal lives as well. Everyone works because there is no way you can live from the music unless your band sells hundreds of thousands of albums. We don't even come close to that, obviously. One can only hope."

Normality usually executes on personality because of the routine. Do you think or actually find music as an "escape", an oasis of meaningful realms which are considered, for and by some, abnormal? There are other ways to fight routine like drugs, alcohol...what about you?

"Most of us drink very little alcohol, and we don't do drugs at all. None of us do. Music is in a way an escape but it's also something we love to do, so not only is it an escape but in fact one of the main things we do. If we could make a living doing it, we would, but it's impossible. I think we still consider this to be what we do though, and other jobs are just to pay the bills, at least that's how I feel."

The photos prove that only Lars cut his hair. Do you think there is a soon change of your look?

"Carl cut his hair recently too, and Lars grew his out since then but just cut it again now. We're not really that concerned with who has long hair and who has short hair though, as the music will sound the same regardless."

You actually started to work pretty hard for WINDS third chapter and I have a feeling the new tracks might be more Dark, complex and meditative. Am I wrong?

"I think there's a rougher edge to the new WINDS material for sure, and it's definitely the darkest material we've done so far. But by that I don't mean that we're moving any closer to black metal or death metal or anything like that, I'm just talking about the atmosphere and the mood in the music. I feel very strongly about the new material, as do the other members of the band. I always say that it's our goal to improve by each release, and that's something we feel we will do with this one, even though Reflections is a work that we're really proud of and satisfied with. But over time we're still developing as musicians, we're better now than we were a year and a half ago, and we have a lot more to offer still I can assure you."

Do you expect or intend for this new album to be released at a bigger label such as Nuclear Blast or Century Media? Up to my expectations...you should have received so far many more offers and even more advantageous.

"Strangely enough it seems the awareness of WINDS among bigger labels is relatively low. These two labels you mention would probably not be ideal candidates for WINDS, as we would want to look more towards labels with a less commercial and a more artistic focus. But we are looking for a new label in Europe right now, which was something we were even



encouraged to do by Roberto, as we're now at a point where an underground budget can only take WINDS so far, and we'd like to go beyond that."

Andy, our journey inside WINDS galaxy must have an end. You were a nice and patient guide and I hope for this material to open the eyes of all skeptical ones. I do appreciate you agreed for the interview, especially since my questions are so "inquisitorial" and I wish you for the best!

Yet no so soon...the ending part...as I have one little...tiny question: if the golden fish would agree to make three desires come true, which would they be? "If these wishes should be related to WINDS, one would be that we find a dependable label we can work with and develop a long-term relationship with for the future. Also that we'll keep on receiving great response by press and media is something I hope for, and if we could get to the point where we'd be able to live from the music, then my wishes have come true."

October, 2002



Press Reviews

AD ARMA! MAGAZINE-issue 1, 2001
(80 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white)

Tadas indeed knows what he's doing... and I hope for this new title to enjoy at least the same success "Ledo Takas" magazine gained so far. Having a black background, this new project resembles with "Ablaze" as far as design is regarded and it is performed by Oskorei Graphics, which means one's eye can definitely take pleasure in it. On the other hand, I believe the trend has an important part since all these standard forms are met especially at ultra-known magazines! As far as the materials are concerned, this time Tadas packed together lots of talented writers such as Timothy Dovsky and Yuri Arkadin, so that the final outcome has all the values to be bloody envied! Cross my heart for I speak the truth! So, we have literature, interviews..., all well structured, inspiringly conceived and excellently expressed. Oriented towards Black/Death Metal, "Ad Arma!" most surely is a challenge for the entire Metal scene and I offer for example as captivating and informative interviews such with: MORBID ANGEL, TORMENTOR, CLANDESTINE BLAZE, SKYFORGER or PRIMORDIAL. I must admit that the others are rather simplistic and not much of an enchantment. I do agree with the critical manner of reviewing although I cannot help myself in noticing a certain preference for brutal releases! It is something different from what I prefer, musically speaking, but this magazine should, for real, be part of your collection! It only costs 6 \$ and it is a good debut, if I can use this term, with an excellent logo! Any other words are useless! Congratulations! Tadas Kazlauskas, P.D. 3080, Pamenkalnio 28, Lt-2026, Vilnius-26, Lithuania, ledo@banga.lt Rating: 0.90/1 (15.10)

AD ARMA! MAGAZINE-issue 2, 2002
(80 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white)

The new issue reveals a universe exclusively dedicated to Black Metal, a fact able to disappoint me beyond any imagination! The explanation might be simple: Tadas focused better on the label while the magazine passed to Northwind, a pretty known character in the area of famous Finnish fanzines

of some time ago. I didn't notice many changes, neither in presentation, nor in texts, but nevertheless the two of them seem to be more indulgent and generous in reviewing in spite of the genuine feature of the magazine! I believe the interview with Frost/SATYRICON is the most charismatic and intriguing one followed by VARATHRON (a mature and realistic discussion with Necroabyssious), NECROMANTIA, MANES, MALIGN, ACHERON and other less successful (in the THORNS' one, the questions were so much longer than the answers!!!) still orientated towards Black Metal. There are included as well two live performances reports, rather too summary and "in the routine" way...and the appetite for hilarious details was really not an option for me! "Inferno" (in November at the second edition!) is one of the festivals I surely would have preferred to know more about since I understood that the organizers (Khaoz Productions) had quite strong ambitions in turning it into the most powerful one in Scandinavia. But this is it! All in all, it could be considered a booming issue, limited as far as the musical horizon is concerned...or maybe just a faithful promoter of this extreme style. I continue to name and number myself as a constant reader of this publication because "Ad Arma" definitely doesn't deceive anyone! You can benefit of quality at the same price modest publications offer...www.ledotakas.com Rating: 0.90/1 (21.10)

ANCIENT CEREMONIES MAGAZINE-issue 7, April- June 2001
(72 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white, coloured cover)

I am not kin on this kind of publications since they stand somewhere at the limit between underground and commercial. In other words, too much of advertising, succinct interviews focused solely on musical information, reviews of all kinds (over 250) some gigs' reports and that would be all. For someone eager to find out more and more, the magazine might fight the monthly ones! For someone who desires to read between lines, Nuno's work is not enough! The most important thing is that an

underground magazine has succeeded to become famous and it seems like its run is higher and higher, which is a nice aspect for each of us. Graphics and printing are excellent, trendy, with nothing particular but neither something to bother: decent and professional. It contains interviews with: DIABOLIC, ENSLAVED, EXCITER, MALEVOLENT CREATION and PRIMORDIAL...and the list reaches 30 ones. I understood it is the tenth issue...so, there is weightiness in it and if I take in account the free CD, I might even say it is worth the money (6\$)! Nuno Santos, Apartado 60334, 2701-904 Amadora, Portugal, www.ancientceremonies.com Rating: 0.81/1 (16.10)

AXA VALAHA ZINE-issue 1 (28 A4 pages, Romanian, Xerox)

This is a pale debut in lack of experience, with less significant articles and euphoric and rather too subjective reviews. I don't want to "destroy" this zine because I find easier to praise it. There are very few marks to be pointed out, but here comes an attempt: initiative, effort, enthusiasm, knowledge in autochthon underground field, an interesting interview (ARCHAOS), some entertaining gigs' reports. Well, after all, it is only a debut (I understood there is also a promo issue) and I find pointless to comment any further. It is about some pages that cannot upset anyone who might browse them but neither would receive much more than a regular appreciation for the intention exclusively. As for the results..., maybe the closest friends would notice, not I! Rating: 0.65/1 (16.10)

AXA VALAHA ZINE-issue 2 (44 A4 pages, English, Xerox)

It seems like Nosferatu has decided to improve the quality of materials and skimming the pages, with their Xerox facet, I practically remembered "Kogaionon" old times: no lay-out, no artistic shape (just a logo better than the first issue's one), not too many interviews, less reviews and rather too short (written in hurry and in lack of eloquent details)...yet many than the former issue included (over 110)... In other words, it surely looks better than before and stepping for the better and

better..., with more profound interviews, a remarkable changed manner of reviewing and an overall texture that proves maturity, solely in comparison with the previous one! I still think it is too earlier to drop certain conclusions since I believe that, if Nosferatu really desires to impose himself, it takes time for another appearance to attest evolution of any kind. Until then...everything is at an underground unprofessional level, at least as far as a magazine is concerned. We know there is a label as well with this name and its activity is higher than for this magazine...but I find nice to notice underground bands getting promoted and, perhaps, in time, this shall extend and develop as otherwise...the end is near! Mihai Caraveteanu, Str. Victoriei, Bl.M4, Sc.D, ap.11, Turnu Magurele, 0750, TR, Romania, Nosferatu666@K.ro, axa666@yahoo.com. Rating: 0.71/1 (16.10)

BARBARIC POETRY ZINE-Issue 2, October 2001 (32 pages A4, Xerox, English)

I have received this issue from Janne Huhta, the person devoted to a mission of building a name for "Barbaric Poetry". Those 32 pages are a sample of underground extreme Metal fanzine, without a certain facet or super contents...but rather what it used to be on UG market almost 10 years ago. Texts' destination is clearly tilting towards Death Metal and even Gore and Grind Core, thus all who adore bands in MACABRE type can read amongst the few pages quality interviews with CIANIDE, KAAMOS, DESECRATION OF VIRGIN, EMBALMES SOULS, THANATOS, SKEPTICISM, as well as diverse reviews of older and newer albums of Death Metal area. There is also a heading addressed to magazines' reviewing and I quite have had a surprise for not finding "Kogaionon" criticized especially if taking in account that the mainstream suggests it bestows an Alternative Gothic atmosphere. And Janne is a declared fan of extreme Death Metal. Anyway, it is about a limited "baggage" as far as information is regarded and a modest approach as for the texts. There is a remarkable thing namely: what he actually adores

has the benefit of being absolutely professionally treated, with lots of details and well pointed out! It costs 4 \$ and you can order at: Janne Huhta, Aprilgatan 72, 415 15 Gothenburg, Sweden, prophecy_jh@hotmail.com. Rating: 0.74/1 (20.09)

FROM BEYOND ZINE-issue 6, Winter 2001 (32 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white)

I do admit I have heard lots of rumours next to this zine like being an extreme one, full of horror materials, exclusively dedicated to real Death disciples who despise modern compromises. All are true!!! NECROPHAGIA-interview is an intelligent one and for all who still respect this band I assume it is urgent for you to read it. There are also other interesting materials like the dialogues with IMMOLATION, DIABOLIC, ASPHYX, NIFELHEIM or DARK THRONE. I find the reviewing manner rather simplistic but straight with references solely to famous Death Metal bands (see ex MY DYING BRIDE). All in all, this must be an interesting issue (unfortunately with fewer pages than desired), in lack of meditation or introspection yet definitely dedicated to Horror Death Metal! P.O. BOX 1756, N-7416 Trondheim, Norway, zombi@c2i.net Rating: 0.78/1 (17.10)

GOLDEN LAKE PRODUCTIONS MAGAZINE-#1 Winter/Spring 2002 (56 pages A4, professionally printed on glossy paper, colour cover, English)

Nice surprise for my demanding tastes...! Fraser Mc Gartland has not resisted for such temptation of transforming his regular catalogue into a professional magazine! Well done! I'd say everything is quite nice indeed, a simple lay-out without too many remarkable graphical valences, much more information than what a simple catalogue might contain but less diversity than usually preserved in a first class underground magazine. If reviews follow a clumsy line with no extended details and rather too praising, well, interviews are much more substantial than expected for a first issue and therefore you can "spoil" yourselves with nice discussion such as with bands like: APRILIE ETHEREAL, AURORA BOREALIS, ENTHRONED, BATTLE OF CULLODEN, GOREROTTED, HELLBORN, MALEDICTION, MITHRAS, BATTLE OF LARGS, MOURNING BELOVETH, MYSTICA, OBSIDIAN GATE, ORDO DRACONIS, ORPHANED LAND, THANATOSCHIZO or TVANGESTE. Mexican Scene Report is pretty "thin" but objective and that is why I can say, with no doubt, that all in all it is a successful issue having as bonus a CD compilation (including as well some bands you already had the chance to read about inside!). Contact: GLP, 19 Castlehill Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5JZ, Scotland, http://musicfans.to/goldenlake. Rating: 0.79/1 (20.09)

IMHOTEP MAGAZINE-issue 7, "Invitation" 2001 (72 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, partially coloured)

Many readers actually associated this magazine with mine and probably mostly due to interviews length. Everything is possible and permitted. As far as I am regarded, Roy's work is a quality one and I have all respect for his activity. Of course, I must admit sometimes he mistakes and exaggerates or perhaps he slips up when details are concerned...but all these are reasonably

explicable and natural...since there is a huge material to be released. Now to pass at this "invitation"... there is nothing new but some colour on the pages and, naturally, the interviews are as detailed and captivating as ever, such as: SOLEFALD, ENSLAVED, KATATONIA, MORBID ANGEL, OPERA IX, NILE, MALEVOLENCE, AGATHODAIMON, THE BLACK LEAGUE. There is also an interview with RHAPSODY, a band not so connected with the regular segment of extreme Metal readers...to which there is chosen a much too coloured version, probably with the straight intention to strike eyes...(if up to me...I'd say this wasn't a wise inspired decision even if justified through Roy's recent fascination for their last material...). Such a pity...I'd say... as here comes another person ready to disappear in popular Metal mist, he, he... There are over 200 reviews made in the same critical manner but rather confusing for myself and only...why so? Probably because now "IMHOTEP" is represented by two darkened souls: Kristensen and Sauli Vuoti and besides them there are as well three collaborators! And I guess I find this irritating as each one of them has a personal view and personal tastes...so that, in the end I would need each one to make a review for the same album so that I could finally realize what is the album's quality. Although I find this strange...it may be possible for the reader, because of such diversity in a critical expression, to have certain benefits and a larger and clearer spectrum for a thoroughgoing study of the materials. I still am conservative. The design is completely changed in comparison with the previous one being replaced with a decent simple one (Oskorei Graphics)...I must say the cover is indeed distasteful but pretty representative for this issue title. Anyway, trust me, the magazine is really worth

IMHOTEP MAGAZINE-issue 8, "Inferno" 2002 (72 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, partially coloured)

He, he, Roy...! You were about to let your magazine freezing! Right after an optimistic message specifying to be printed more often, Roy probably was close to enter a mood pretty familiar and similar for actual underground publications, which is shutting down all activities. Luckily, the crew became larger and since, for the time being, there are seven persons in the editorial staff plus another three special guests having some interviews. Well, it is important to have in mind the positive side and to enjoy it is not dead! You probably read in the editorial...this was the raw smell of printed pages that determined and helped me to actually take the decision (only five minutes extent) of releasing another "Kogaionon" issue. Well, I guess I have to thank Roy for such and sincerely I am grateful for this. This issue preserves a design more carefully achieved than the former one and the entire artistic impression seems to be slightly over "Invitation". There is nothing new to have featured long interviews but I find a little "forced" (and in lack of fair play next to the readers) to have enclosed parts of previous materials (see IMMORTAL) or other magazines' reproductions (MANOWAR) plus some short

questions with Ronnie James Dio. As for the rest... you can find other pleasant discussions even if not as charismatic as they used to be with BEHEMOTH (the only one Roy actually made), CHARON, BALSAGO'TH, CREST OF DARKNESS, ZYKLON, FUNERIS NOCTURUM, DIABOLICAL MASQUERADE, and IMPALED NAZARENE plus a super-interview with OPETH (conceived by Mikko, Quadrivium magazine)-rather better narrated than the one I made and included in last issue (made with a different member not the leader-Mike). As far as reviews are regarded...well, you have now 400 to fill your time with! This issue goes as well with Xerox annexe featuring more other reviews; it probably followed as a natural thing in the time between processing and actually releasing the magazine on the market. Could it be a swan's song this very issue? Let's hope not! For me, this very issue has certain significance and I am completely satisfied of its quality although there are some things to be commented on such basis. If you desire for the magazine not to die, buy it! This is exactly Roy's message inside the editorial. It costs you 7 \$, tax included, and I assure you one full night is not enough for reading it! As for the re-readings..., well, this is up to you. Rating: 0.87/1 (15.10)

MOONLIGHT SHADOWS ZINE-issue#1, "Angels Weeping", Summer/Autumn 2002 (36 pages A4, listed white/black, reasonable quality, English)

One of the "Kogaionon"'s loyal "disciple" has decided to start his own publication having as a second source of inspiration the Italian magazine "Vampiria". There are no freshness and originality, just another magazine guided by standards already imposed by "elder" ones. Nevertheless, for a first issue, I must admit I was pleasantly surprised of interviews' quality because of intriguing characteristics and length. The reviews have focused on magazines John bought during last couple of years and a few albums strictly on the editor's interest. I guess it is not quite a "blast" ready to bewilder Metal underground press but neither mediocre. Moongleam conceived the entire image-promotion; therefore as far as design and layout are concerned...all seems to be fine. You can find interviews with: HAGAL, AMBIREON, THRONEUM, MELEK-THA, EIBON RECORDS, MY DYING BRIDE, FATAL PORTRAIT, SHADOWS DANCE, VAMPIRIA MAGAZINE and ENSLAVEMENT OF BEAUTY. It was edited in 100 samples and you can order directly at: John Zikos, Zissiou 38-40, 11145 Kato Patissia, Athens, Greece, deathcult55@hotmail.com Rating: 0.73/1 (21.09)

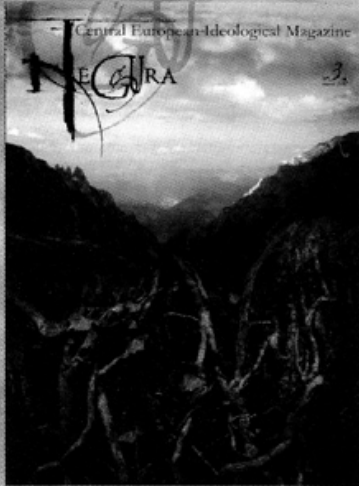
NECROMANTIC ART MAGAZINE-#1/July 2002 (44 pages, A4, printed white/black on glossy quality paper, layout similar with "HMM", English)

I decided to review some magazines as well since they persist in symbolizing the underground Metal basis despite of the fact that modern modus operandi (see Internet!) tends to become a fashion mostly due to its commode advantages hidden behind. Thus, here I am reviewing this autochthon magazine desired to be an appendix of "Heavy Metal Magazine", which means it is financially supported by "Cartea de nisip" print-house. Appreciable intentions, maximum effort, professional illustration, optimistic

result...should be the first words. Instead of that, I wasn't impressed by the materials' quality but I do take in account this is only a debut! I'd say there is a certain message slightly elitist but probably both Dragos and Ionut' ambition is governed by expressing imperatives and here from all might sound a little subjective. And I find this quite natural and I guess this is not something to be trapped in. The magazine's direction follows extreme Metal and therefore the interviews are chosen alike: LORD BELIAL, TSJUDER, BLACK DAWN, VOKODLOK, NECROPHOBIC, SERPENT OBSCENE... including however a few "domestic" bands such as TRISTITIA, DAWN OF DREAMS or OVERSOUL. You can find as well an interview with Season Of Mist French label's boss, some news, reviews for rather old albums and this is it. Interviews are classical with simple questions regarding music exclusively and consequently the answers are the same. The reviews preserve a superficial note rather praising Black/Death Metal, which I assume it is editors' decision or preference. I should mention that most of the reviews are addressed to magazines/fanzines and on the whole they are underground being bought by editors only...I sit and ask myself why "Kogaionon" never showed interest for them?! Yet the most important thing is that reviewing this magazine actually means "Kogaionon" still exists...he, he... I guess it is considerable for such magazine to be released but I must say that, if any serious extension is desired, it is required a professional compass reading as far as texts are concerned otherwise all might maintain forever at a status of autochthon indulgence. And since it is in English, this is even imperative...because abroad readers are familiar and spoiled with all kinds of magazines from famous ones-monthly ones till the most introspective and detailed underground fanzines. All in all this is a certainty for the Metallic Romanian press and maybe shall gain respect if the two writers guide themselves by personal opinions and not by inflicted patterns and if there is a more criticizing attitude...as they should be aware positive elements always blow up instantly in Metal fans' faces...In order to avoid the editors' excuses for not printing contact details inside (of bands, labels or magazines), which is absolutely wrong for an underground magazine (for example, where from could I buy "Necromantic Art" magazine of which I read?)...Well, to fix somehow such problem...I give you magazine's contact address: Dragos Onel, CP23, OP13, Ploiesti, 2000, PH, Romania. The price is 75.000 lei or 4 EUR for Europe. I suppose you should keep an eye on this magazine as I trust in a serious potential! www.necromantic-art.tk Rating: 0.74/1 (16.09)

NEGURA-CENTRAL EUROPEAN IDEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE-No.3/March 2002 (40 pages A4, professionally printed on glossy paper, quality, English, coloured cover)

Well, this time, Gabi Mafa/Negru has passed beyond all expectations as the partnership with Dan F. Spataru have concretised into an issue I have only congratulations to address! Moreover, I noticed the spectrum of interviewed bands became larger and therefore the magazine attends to a greater scale of readers-fans, from the angry ones to the most melancholic Gothic-Doom Metal



ones. You can find here some elegant interviews with EMPEROR, MALEVOLENCE or LUX OCCULTA, articles referring to mythologies and ancient civilizations (North American one and a first chapter about Dacians-Romanian ancestors-) and also some simple boring interviews with REBAELLIUM, BLOOD RED THRONE, AVRIGUS, ASMODEUS, INDIAN FALL, AVENGER, THYRFING or CRUACHAN. There are reviews as well but not so great in numbers and neither in quality although there can be spoken of a sufficiency in information with reference to albums, magazines or demos. I am glad for "Negura" to have reached such level and I am sure the reactions of all who already read this very issue are pretty the same. This is the most significant step a magazine achieved so far in the metallic underground press for the last year and I believe that, at least at the debate-point, this time "Negura" excelled "Oskorei". There are, of course, some weak points but I see no reason to outline them here and I hope for the next issue to recuperate the rest of details solely an extremely fastidious person might hilariously point out. It seems like this part of Romania actually can provide publications of high quality! It is only a pity that the pages number defies unwritten laws of respectable underground! P.O. BOX 8-747, 1900 Timisoara, Timis, Romania, www.negura.ro Rating: 0.85/1 (21.09)

NIGHTWALK MAGAZINE issue 4, Spring 2001 (48 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white, coloured cover)
Attila proves seriousness in what he does but not necessarily dazzling ideas. Why so? Perhaps because the materials seem to be conceived in a classical manner yet a trendy one as well, in lack of originality or multiple details...? All in all, the reviews chapter is a weak point and mostly payable to a small number of them and to an unsatisfying informing process since a real passionate reader might have not enough of extreme underground. There are good interviews such as DARK THRONE and DODHEIMSGARD but average ones as well like: MISTELTEIN, LUX OCCULTA, OBSIDIAN GATE, PANZERCHRIST, CULTUS SANGUINE, THYRFING, EINHERJER, HIN ONDE, HAVAYOTH, MANDATORY, LIMBONIC ART, ANCIENT WISDOM and SUSPERIA. The entire texture is laid out with huge fonts and, no doubt, if the photos and fonts were a bit smaller, the magazine could have

definitely contained only 40 pages. As a compensation of such, we can find a modest compilation CD...there is no harm in it since it is free, is it? As a conclusion, it is something pretty taken care of but in lack of a vivid strength! Attila Mate, H-4032 Debrecen, Tessedik S.140, Hungary, attilamate@hotmail.com Rating: 0.77/1 (15.10)

OSKOREI MAGAZINE #6/Nov/Dec 2001 (48 pages A4, partially coloured, professionally printed on glossy paper, English)

Lars Jamne carries on with this magazine in a very serious manner and thus I can see that the run has reached a significant increase because of a higher and higher request/demand. Notable is the quality of design that was a real concern for the editor along with his intention of "colouring" the magazine by inserting colour pages besides the regular complex cover. In fact, Oskorei Graphics has already gained an international appreciation since lots of magazines ask for Lars' skills in graphics and layout. Everything exhales professionalism entitling "Oskorei" to situate at one of the first three priceless underground publications. Unfortunately the manner of conceiving an interview is as simplistic and official as ever featuring strict questions and limited issues of debating. In counterbalance, the reviews are quite the strong point and Lars keeps a vigilant eye insisting on brutal releases full of Death and primitive Black series. Taking in account that "Oskorei" is released once or twice per year, I guess I can confess that I find insufficient 48 pages to cover all noteworthy moments on Metal scene...yet less is always better than nothing! I suppose texts' orientation is pretty diverse so that, besides interviews with Black/Death Metal bands such as: EMPEROR, ZYKLON, THORNS, BAL-SAGOTH, IMMORTAL, DESTRUCTION, ABIGOR, USURPER, CENTINEX, SIRIUS, MANGLED, DIVINE EMPIRE, CRAFT, DIE APOKALYPTISCHEN REITER or DREAMS OF DAMNATION, there can be found others as well: MAUDLIN OF THE WELL, EVERGREY OR FOREFATHER. There is also included a material of ENSLAVED gig next to a CD compilation with 19 less known bands. Pretty much of a useful issue regarding information for all interested in extreme Metal music... I believe another "Oskorei" issue has just been released and it is time for you to take notice of it at this address: OSKOREI, PB640, Sentrum, N-5807 Bergen, Norway, www.oskorei.com. Rating: 0.83/1 (20.09)

QVADRIVIVM ZINE issue 4, September 2001 (60 A4 pages, English, Xerox)

Mamma mia, such pathetic arrangement! Mikko, have all your ships sunk? It is a pity for the texts! The publication is bloody job to be at least defined...harassing one's eyes, hard to browse, without guiding marks or other distinct signs. I understand Mikko wishes to reach an inedited presentation (see the former issue!) but a Xerox quality is so low, the lay-out is at least embarrassing and all seem to be governed by chaos and lack of coherence. Solely a patient reader could glance through the entire material without getting mad! Here is an interview and here as well is a review...completed with a quote or a

comment...uhhhhhh, you've almost lost me, pal! Bad idea! Especially since the materials' quality is irreproachable full of meditative ideas, with an impressive package of information, tough but correct reviews and interviews far beyond the musical spectrum... Mikko is one of the fewest who pays attention to details that colour and impregnate a magazine! Unfortunately, the shape of such inherent quality was forgotten...If it was for a "more standard" (oh, dear, how stupid I may sound....but for the truth, the magazine harassed my eyes!!!) arrangement with a certain order in everything, besides a professional printing job, well, then, I might have spoken of one of the best underground magazines in the last 5 years! There is an interesting journey within miscellaneous dimensions from ATARAXIA, PLAN E or ALEX KURTAGIC till EYES OF LIGELA, ENID, MOTHER DEPTH, LOVE HISTORY. The authors' musical tastes are very close to mine and perhaps that is why I so much like the material. It is definitely a very intelligently conceived magazine and out of the typical trendy patterns and I find outrageous for it not to have the benefit of an image at the same level! Do you know how I find it? Well, I indulge myself in comparing it with a genial good-humoured girlfriend/partner with a very high IQ but with a horrible wrong measured look. As far as discussion/dialogue is regarded and implied, everything is more than OK..., perfect, I'd say! But what if I desire for more? There is a huge obstacle, possible to overcome yet still an impediment I knock myself at despite of all my freedom of prejudices and prejudgements. And I cannot wonder of such unfair paradox...the ones with money release puerile materials and the intelligent ones have none! Intelligent yet weird and sinister equilibrium (???) of nature.... Mikko Kuronen, Tarjanteenkatu 7F89, 33720 Tampere, Finland, antimetale@sunpoint.net Rating: 0.87/1 (17.10)

SERENITY MAGAZINE issue 9, February 2001 (52 A4 pages, Swedish, professionally printed, black/white, coloured cover)

Well, you can imagine how much and many I could understand in a language I know not! But let's give it a try! Those 13 interviews seem to be long and interesting if we guide ourselves by the "he, he, he" of the interviewees... Otherwise, there are lots of reviews of all kinds and, from the qualifications, I can consider a help in finding out the magazine's orientation, which might be: Black(?)Death/Power Metal. I guess it is rather natural since the interviews are with bands like: ZYKLON, GEHENNA, VOMITORY, CRADLE OF FILTH, DIMMU BORGIR and ANNIHILATOR... I also assume it is desired to be a serious and respectful magazine in Nordic lands. What I dislike? Well, except my lack of Swedish language knowledge...the same fashion of promoting exclusively bands en vogue. Robban Kanto, Norevagen 19A (nb), 711 32 Lindesberg, Sweden, serenity.magazine@swipnet.se, www.serenitymagazine.come.to Rating: 0.81/1 (17.10)

VAMPIRIA MAGAZINE issue 5, "My Kingdom", June 2001 (76 A4 pages, English, professionally printed, black/white, coloured cover)

Francesco probably has had enough of criticizing regarding the quality of his magazine and thus simply decided to

operate some major changes. First of all, the budget must have been bigger... In such conditions, all looks professional, with an elegant design, an attractive illustration and moreover, there are 2 compilation CDs of first class. As far as the substance is regarded, I must say there is no huge difference from the former ones, which means OK! We can enjoy interviews with NECRODEATH, ZYKLON, NOTRE DAME, CANNAN, THORNS, GIRLS UNDER GLASS, IN THE NURSERY, THEATRES DES VAMPIRES...and the list continues with lots of other bands. Although the magazine looks fine, I can sense a note of fashion, which can be translated like: there is nothing particularly pointed out but a fact of being part of the professional magazines category. A detail: because there were some materials to be included after, Francesco separately edited an A5 annexe that, unfortunately damages the image of the entire package titled "My Kingdom". A huge step forward...but let's see the next issue! Price: 6\$. Rating: 0.80/1 (15.10)

VAMPIRIA MAGAZINE issue 6, "Beloved Apocalypse", June 2002 (68 A4 pages, black/white, coloured cover, professionally printed, English)

Francesco, you definitely involve your soul and heart in what you do, there is no doubt! This last issue is not much different from the previous one, at least not as far as the imagery is regarded! I notice a good change, in better, in interviews quality and I refer especially to the one with BATHORY, which I find the most intriguing one...I think the frank mature dialogue has the gift of dispelling the confusion and drastically straightening out reality from myth and idolatry. The interview with DEINONYCHUS is not bad either but I don't understand why present here since I remember of it being included within magazine's pages in times before yet...since his label offered Marco a contract... Anyway, I think it is a kind of lousy miserable promotion of which place here...I still have difficulties in understanding. THEATRE OF TRAGEDY, TCHORT, PENTAGRAM, SHINING, CRUACHAN, DIABOLICUM, MALOMBRA, JUDITH, CENTURIAN are some other interviews included here, more or less interesting or well achieved. Reviews chapter can easily attract readers' interest...still, for this time, the author preferred, probably in a hurry, a similar structure I used as well in my last issue: style, details and vote... From what I see, we come to have in common matching tastes except that Francesco's euphoria manifests more often and easier in superlatives addressed to the reviewed bands. If there is something to have bothered me at this very issue, I think it concerns editor's positivism next to the music he listened to and probably abundant advertising spaces. As for the rest, "Vampiria" starts to find its own identity and moreover, Francesco becomes more and more professional. For those who decide to pay the insignificant price of 5 \$, I tell you this: it comes along with 2 certified CDs featuring over 40 Metallic underground bands... Francesco Palumbo, P.O. Box 31, 84015 Nocera Sup.re (SA), Italy, vampiria@mykingdommusic.net Rating: 0.85/1 (23.11)



Audio Reviews

Here we go again with new reviews and, of course, other subjective judgments... It is not in my desire for you to take for granted as correct and objective what I write here. Each of you is entitled at his own opinion and therefore many of the albums I expressed my comments about might be completely different from what you think or you would feel. It is absolutely natural to be like this and I'd even say it has to be this way. For the following ones I indulge in qualifying the materials into a range from 0.5 to 1, hoping my appreciations managed to accurately synthesize and point out what was important. You probably ask yourselves what should be the aim and purpose of a review... and I tell you that mainly to help you decide if the material deserves your attention or not... and this goes as well for the verdict regarding whether buying or not.

ABADDON INCARNATE(EIR)-
"Nadir" CD'02 (43. 30 min, 24 tracks)
(SENTINEL)

After a shy debut at Season of Mist ("The Last Supper") these Irish veterans, following 12 years of existence, finally come up to release their second album placed in the same Death/Grind sphere. I guess I have nothing to reproach as these ex-BEREAVED are just ok but I found nothing to particularly strike me. I may be saturated of such sonorities or maybe the band really doesn't bring anything new... as all is too common and modest. I am in lack of other words.
www.abaddonincarnate.8m.com,
www.sentinelireland.com Rating:
0.70/1 (23.10)

ABOMINATOR (AUS)-"Subversives
for Lucifer" CD'01 (48. 37 min, 8
tracks)
(OSMOSE/ROCRIS DISC)

Do you still remember BESTIAL WARIUS? Well, ABOMINATOR just follows the line of the most famous Australian Black Death band, even having Damon Bloodstorm on vocal, so you can imagine what inferno can be heard out here. Everything wheezes out fury, primitivism, anger, violence, fastness! Guitars are like huge noisy machineries, battery never seems to stop, the vocal bellow deep out from his lungs in a satanic manner... no way to doubt, the apocalypse is here! Although entertaining and provocative at a first audition, the devastating sound becomes more and more linear, monotonous with each track, having as a final result a boring album. If you feel angry on something, someone, or being just upset and nervous, then withdraw into your room, play the CD and discharge yourselves together with ABOMINATOR. You may even break some bottles or kick your head strongly into radiator! It would definitely be the most efficient prescription for calming you down. For all who desire composing brutal music, ABOMINATOR's first album as well as the new compositions might turn out to be precious marks of inspiration...
Rating: 0.57/1 (2001)

ABSCISS(USA)-"Through The Cracks

Of Death" CD'02 (43. 43 min, 11
tracks)
(PEACEVILLE)

Sick minds, infernal sound, vomiting voices, ravishing battery, demonical guitars' riffs... this is what you can "enjoy" on the fourth album of the Americans. And the whole band numbers just three members! Two of them are famous one: Chris Reifert and Danny Coralles, pretty known from AUTOPSY times and I believe this is a fact to be mentioned. Moreover I think the entire sound reminds of AUTOPSY, which is an angry ultra aggressive Death Gore Metal. No doubts, the three of them are real good instrumentalists but their approach on music is rather too common and 10 years old. Most certainly, the album shall satisfy all desires any sick extreme Death disciple might have and I am sure this is the very reason Peaceville agreed the contract. I also remind you that, during their 8 years of existence, ABSCESS had quite a long walk from Relapse to Listenable and now right to the British label since all the albums were good samples of unlimited aggressiveness. For the interested ones here comes the band's history: 1994-Demo, 1994-"Raw, Sick&Brutal Noize" demo, 1995-"Crawled Up From The Sewer" demo, 1995-"Filthy Fucking Freaks live on the radio-tape, 1996-"Urine Junkies" CD, 1996-"Seminal Vampires & Maggotmen" CD, 1997-"Throbbing Black Werebeast" EP, 1998-"Open Wound" demo and 2000-"Tormented" CD. For the present, a new bass player has joined the band, Joe Allen and as a succinct description of their music I can offer you: Sick, Brutal, Raw and Suicidal Death Gore! Rating: 0.77/1 (23.08)

ABSU(USA)-"Tara" CD'01 (52. 06 min,
13 tracks)
(OSMOSE/ROCRIS DISC)

Splendid cover, exceptional artist in Kris Verwimp person! If the music were as well at the same level, "Tara" might have induced an agreeable mood anytime. Yet, how could anyone digest this kind of Black Thrash since solely a miracle saved their instruments not to fly into a rage. Everything is ultra-super fast, aggressive and brutal! This is the '80's Thrash return (with drums that

seldom followed a rhythm, guitars' riffs stopping only at the end of the track and satanic voice terrifying everybody's ears including those who believed it music). The album's fastness is at least amazing. Yet the concept of "Tara" counts on a strong background of Celtic tradition and occult themes. An interesting aspect is the participation, as invited guests, of some KING DIAMOND, MELECHESH, MERCYFUL FATE or RIGOR MORTIS members. "Tara" is exclusively dedicated to all people mad about extreme music performed in old style.
Rating: 0.57/1 (2001)

AEBÄ(GER)-"Rebellion-Edens Asche"
CD'02 (66. 35 min, 10 tracks)
(LAST EPISODE)

It is one of the German bands that have both luck and insight since, in short time, and managed to release three albums. I personally am not mad about this particular kind of Black metal because of its temporary status while the Germans' performance is nothing else but exactly today fashion: melodiousness, atmosphere, peaceful parts alternating with fast ones, aggressiveness, demonic voices... The new album situates itself much higher than the former ones and that is because of the guitars, which are more Heavy, even Speed but also due to the intense keyboard. The extreme voice, a hell one, is rather common and linear and the battery never seems to stop. It is an apocalyptic universe, on one hand melodic and atmospheric, on the other very brutal. If I had to name now three German bands with a huge immediate success belonging to the new Black Metal wave, I would say: MYSTIC CIRCLE, AGATHODAIMON and AEBÄ. www.aeba.de. Rating: 0.79/1 (23.02)

AENIMA(POR)-"Never Fragile"
MCD'02 (29. 18 min, 6 tracks)
(EQUILIBRIUM)

This might be a surprise for Gothic Rock fans! Although the band has nothing uncommon to present, the sound is interesting and digestible... pleasing and professional! Taking as guiding marks bands like THE GATHERING or THE 3RD AND THE MORTAL, AENIMA's music insists on

Carmen's voice while the instruments offer to the listener an incredibly comfortable atmosphere. Well, if usually Gothic Rock elements are pretty widespread to almost every band of today, the Ethereal side seems to be much developed in Portuguese's sound, which leads to a more or less distinct reverberation yet still pretty disturbing and confusing for me. I'd say that the Rock shade splices at the limit with the Ethereal one... in other words, the extroverted message seems to join successfully the exploring significance but I tell you... here from harmony is just a far away aim... Any way, this mini-album deserves all the attention and perhaps the final stand is to be settled when a full album is released.
www.aetherial.org,
www.equilibriummusic.com Rating:
0.80/1 (21.09)

AESMA DAEVA(USA)-"Here Lies One
Whose Name Was Written In Water"
CD'02 (59. 26 min, 12 tracks)
(ROOT OF ALL EVIL)

This is in deed a wonderful surprise! Perhaps this might be the actual challenge AUTUMN TEARS must assume, in the view that they are famous for an original musical concept. The intriguing combination of Dark Wave, Metal and Classic music provides AESMA DAEVA an interesting status of an atmospheric meditative full of ambience project, with remarkable female voices, hypnotic passages on a Dark structure while valuable instrumentalists are displayed. In fact, from the very first tunes you can realize that there are some professional musicians and that is true since John, Nick and Rebecca follow intensive musical lessons. If you liked ELEND or enjoyed DEAD CAN DANCE, then AESMA DAEVA must definitely charm you! Rating: 0.80/1 (19.02)

AESMA DAEVA(USA)-"The Eros Of
Frigid Beauty" CD'02 (55. 54 min, 7
tracks)
(ROOT OF ALL EVIL)

Well, I really was anxious to have listened to this second album! I wished I had a view of how could Classical Gothic Metal evolve! And I did, it evolved toward more complicated and knotty realms. If the first tunes tended

to a LACRIMOSA sound, the rest is just placed nowhere and in connection with none and nothing. Dark, Epic Progressive Rock with serious roots in extreme Metal, an outstanding female voice (soprano), grandiose keyboard, mighty sound, Heavy guitars... and I guess I have difficult time to express it otherwise in many words. Those who have listened to the first album can imagine what course their music followed... more technical, strange shocking rhythms, less melody... an intricate sound for ears of AUTUMN TEARS' fans, for example. I cannot say whether is better than the first, but "The Eros Of Frigid Beauty" disclose an insane desire to self-protect and isolate... There is a long way for reaching the message of AESMA DAEVA's concept! Rating: 0.83/1 (17.08)

AETERNUS (NOR)-"Ascension Of Terror" CD'01 (43.49 min, 9 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

When you find out that an album was produced in Grieghallen Studio and mastered by Pyten, self-suggestion conducts to the most proper word: excellent. Well, there much truth out here since AETERNUS can be proud of successful clear mixing. This time, Ares, Erik, Radek and here and there Morrigan too, simply put the finger right on the aggressiveness so that the Dark Metal sound transforms into Black Metal mixed with Death and less warm Atmospheric, but an angry voice, insane drums and fast amazing riffs. Not bad at all, these new frames, but I still prefer to listen to "Beyond the Wandering Moon", "...And So Night Became" or even the modern "Shadows Of Old". When former IMMORTAL or GORGOROTH members play in AETERNUS and when being aware of the quite great impression these Norwegians made in front of their fans during live performances, well, there is no (and could not be) doubt relating to their interpretation manner. Just one simple notice, now the aggressiveness is rather too linear, while Death Metal took the place of old times' atmospheric passages promoting a note less relaxing, I would even say one much too serious and tight. This is it, the decision was not ours to make, so we can only listen to or not. www.aeternus.ch. Rating: 0.72/1 (2001)

AGALLOCH (USA)-"Of Stone, Wind, And Pillor" MCD'01 (28.00 min, 5 tracks) (THE END)

This band was quite a unique revelation once hearing the album "Pale Folklore"! It is incredible how Dark could sound an American project! Yet I rather wouldn't travel back in time because Haughm & Co have already finished the recording of their new album "The Mantle". This very MCD features a compilation of new and old tracks-some acoustic, some experimental, others as Dark as always and also a SOL INVICTUS cover version. It is not an exquisite MCD... only a material for transition from the old album to the future direction; a new album is about to be released! 0.72/1 (17.03)

AGALLOCH (USA)-"The Mantle" CD'02 (68.38 min, 9 tracks) (THE END)

Either I became a fan of this American label or the majority of albums lately released at THE END plainly continue to fascinate me... as they actually are a great part of my play-list: WINDS, SLEEPLESS, ARCTURUS... and now,

AGALLOCH! "Pale Folklore" was an album that shocked me since mixture of Dark with Gothic, Doom and Black actually turned my face to the past and a near reference might be SADNESS. It has been more than three years since their debut was released but here they come, after a MCD regarding which you recently read on the site, with great news: John Haughm & Co returns with a new multidimensional opus, structured in 9 epic sequences of a remarkable melancholy, with Rock, Folk, Ambient openings as well as Metal ones from Doom and Gothic to Black or Death. We can enjoy diverse tracks, from quite extended ones ("In the Shadow of Our Pale Companion", appreciatively 15 minutes) till acoustic interludes, extremely lent and meditative. On a superficial audition you actually tend to believe that tracks are meaninglessly prolonged as the entire 70-minute might have been expressed as well in only 45. I don't know which the reality... is and frankly I don't care either... important is only the exquisite emotional state and this is more than enough. As a matter of fact, no doubts, instrumentation is the key point of the sound and the voice embraces different frames during the tracks, from the clear calm even whispered /recited/intonated one to the aggressive and yelling one. If I had to compare the two albums, I discover that Metallic part plays a second role while the acoustic and solos now govern the whole musical universe and some parts remind me of ULVER, SOL INVICTUS, ULVER or PINK FLOYD while the voice often has FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM echoes. I don't know if it is not rather pointless to present more details because, for a successful album, I can only use superlatives... And one of those might be, from now on, enclosed in your vocabulary: **AGALLOCH!** I need to say a few more things: fragments of acoustic guitars remind me of BATHORY ("Twilight of the Gods"); metallic instruments are inspiringly mixed with synth or other spiced elements such as mandolin, wind box/accordion, trombone, bells, cymbal and contrabass... all is mystical, all is Dark... and all is harmony. Welcome in **AGALLOCH's** realm! Rating: 0.95/1 (17.07)

AGATHODAIMON (GER)-"Chapter III" CD'01 (42.48 min, 9 tracks) (NUCLEAR BLAST/ROCRIS DISC)

It seems like German bands own a great advantage if being under a contract with a German label! This very project presents nothing-new special or one way or another unique but the promotion and the feedback is made to measure the invested money. These young musicians have realized, in a short time, three agreeable albums situated someplace at the borders of Black, Gothic and Melodic Metal. Everything is fashion and sounds entertaining, the voice's inflexions seem more successful and the guitars approach an extreme fast rhythm interrupted, from time to time, by melodious even Heavy passages, the keyboard fully creates atmosphere... everything sounds perfect. The recording and mixing surprise from the very first tunes... Yes, I admit it is an interesting album not at all monotonous. I am sure the **AGATHODAIMON's** live performance will strike as well as quite an impact! As a conclusion, "Chapter III" represents a perfect album to the nowadays fashion, well accomplished, even successfully conceived yet not originally at all.

Anyway, uniqueness is not an important factor for some of us... Rating: 0.79/1. (13.01)

AGMEN (CZE)-"Damnation" CD'02 (39.52 min, 9 tracks)

(BREATH OF NIGHT/MERCILESS)
It was quite expected for a release of Akhenaten's label (JUDAS ISCARIOT) to be exactly in the same raw & primitive Black Metal manner. If I also say that the drummer is an ex MANIAC BUTCHER member, then you must surely realize what holocaust awaits for you during the entire 40 minutes. I have no good words to express regarding what I have listened to because everything is too simple in lack of new ideas, just aggressiveness in 90's Black Metal style and that should be all. It is possible for **AGMEN** to please but only the persons who still listen with joy (but not with nostalgia) to first BURZUM's albums. The label informed me that another member joined the duet and they already recorded the second album entitled "Eternal". I am not surprised... and if they perform in the same manner next year we might expect another couple of albums that sound like hell. Rating: 0.62/1 (03/03)

AJATTARA (FIN)-"Itse" CD'01 (38.18 min, 10 tracks)

(SPIKEFARM)
Strange designation for a band! Moreover, everything is performed in Finnish, so the message is clearer than ever... simply I have no clue! Yet... let us approach the three musicians' music. If you enjoyed AMORPHIS' first album, then listening to **AJATTARA** means living again moments of the past. I am afraid I cannot say we face Black, Death or Gothic Metal because the Finn's sound is a knotty one still modern and full of atmosphere. The aggressive voice and abundant keyboard embrace the melodious guitars and undemanding battery so that the result becomes a sound rather confusing and too experimental. I believe that Melodic Metal would be the most suitable characterization of a music which did not convince me at all! Though we can definitely enjoy an excellent quality of sound! Rating: 0.71/1 (10.03)

AKERCOCKE (UK)-"The Goat Of Mendes" CD'01 (56.36 min, 12 tracks) (PEACEVILLE)

The former band, SALEM ORCHID, has signed with Peaceville for three albums but I believe the reason this contract does exist is that the five are from London. Nothing I have listened to so far impressed me, although their manner of approaching music is quite diverse, from Grind and Death to Black Metal rather coloured with Electronic inducements from time to time atmospheric and melodic. I have always appreciated Peaceville's activity yet, I am afraid, this band was not exactly their best choice. I have also read a few reviews of the album and the majority had advanced respectful regards. I am sorry, but I believe that, as long as everything is too complex and the ideas burst into each single tune, it is required either patience or experience to digest it. I must admit that **AKERCOCKE** shows an original musical approach, yet this only cannot guarantee much except little attention in some magazines. As I did not listened to "Rape of the Bastard Nazarene", their first album so far, I am not to pronounce myself on any further appreciation. Let us hope the next one

shall be more explicit?! www.akercocke.com. Rating: 0.52/1 (2001)

ALAS (USA)-"Absolute Purity" CD'01 (44.37 min, 10 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

If saying Erik Rutan, you think of MORBID ANGEL and HATE ETERNAL and if you find out Martina Astner is the one who used to play with THERION, the adrenaline grows. If including Howard Dawis drummer (DIE KRUPPS) and the bass player Scott Hornick (RIPPING CORPSE), then you start to realize it is about a serious band, an exquisite one that definitely has something to say for all brutal music fans. Well, the scenario is perfectly true until the brutal part because the four express now an Atmospheric Emotional Metal, a very clear and strong sound built on Gothic Doom structures with a unique female voice, technical guitar, and discreet bass, simple drums. If talking in account Erik's intelligent keyboard, you can drop the conclusion that **ALAS** is a band enclosed in a range of peaceful worming ones, pleasant at hearing anytime and anywhere. The relaxing atmosphere created by calm tunes and Martina's voice confers "Absolute Purity" the status of a reference innovative original charming album. I would only say it is missing that nerve, that vitality I expected to find at Erik's riffs. Therefore, I observe a certain slight resemblance among the tracks, which means a rather monotonous sound. worldent@monmouth.com. Rating: 0.79/1 (2001)

ALGOL (USA)-"Gorgonus Aura" CD'01 (59.10 min, 8 tracks) (THE TWELFTH PLANET)

I do not have any idea what might be the level of exquisite Black Metal sound for American bands and if they could be proud of such, especially when atmospheric trends are desired. **ALGOL** has nothing new to offer but a modest common Black Death Metal, abundant synth, a pronounced guitar and a throaty simple voice. I find interesting the acoustic tracks, as they tend to be ambient and, from time to time, a few guitars' solos intelligently interweave with the atmosphere already created by synth. Yet these tracks are long enough and have not much in common with the brutal ones. The album seems to be the result of too many chaotic ideas, some good, but placed in an uninspired order. For example, "Gorgonus Aura" represents a summary of heterogenous tracks as music and direction as well. Should we be merciful considering it is solely their debut album?! Greg Singer, 120 Susan Drive, Millersburg, PA 17061, U.S.A., algol666@hotmail.com, www.geocities.com/algol9, THE TWELFTH PLANET, P.O. BOX 22, 65012 Cepagatti (PE), Italy, planet12th@hotmail.com, www.twepla.com. Rating: 0.55/1 (2001)

ANATHEMA (UK)-"Resonance" CD'01 (50.18 min, 15 tracks) (PEACEVILLE)

I do not agree with filling a CD with tracks from the band's different albums, since I find in such an absolutely embarrassing manner of making money on the behalf of its fans. As far as this present one is concerned, only half would be true, because the other half means satisfaction due to "Hope" video-clip and some great tracks ready to take you back in time, such as "Alone", "Far Away" or "Everwake". In other words, here are the

most representative ambient ANATHEMA tracks where female voice is an intense presence, just like the acoustic frame ("Eternity"), the orchestral ones ("The Silent Enigma") or live ("Angelica") and even the PINK FLOYD or BAD RELIGION cover versions... Overall, everything features a simple rather attractive (for nostalgic and romantic people) manner of expressing ANATHEMA. It is a unique exquisite sparkling idea of Peaceville people but nothing more. Website: listen.to/anathema, Rating: 0.68/1 (2001)

ANCIENT RITES (BEL)-"Dim Carcosa" CD'01 (46. 27 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

The most famous Belgian Black Metal band has signed for Hammerheart and I assume this might lead to a fortunate situation of pointing out all their valuable skills of sophisticated refined instruments. Gunther founded the band in 1989 and, during the years, he must have recorded many albums but the signing with Mascot did not bring what Black Metal fans expected. Yet, enough about past, let us present the actual situation. The Belgian quintet comes back in force with the most atmospheric and powerful Black Metal album of theirs and also one of the best of last year. That is because of the authentic formula as well: Gunther Theys (vocals, bass), Yan Yrlund (TWO WITCHES/LACRIMOSA), Domingo S m e t s (AGATHOCLES/RENAISSANCE), Erik (INQUISITOR) and Walter (drums). The tracks are incredibly fast yet full of melodiousness, heavy, featuring an intelligent keyboard, which carries your thought to symphonic-classical frames, Black voice as well as classic backing vocal, piano, a female voice from time to time... a sound reminding me of old ROTTING CHRIST (especially the guitars) or MISANTHROPE (atmosphere). I have nothing to reproach, as far as this album is concerned, even the booklet is superb... everything inspires rhythm, strength and attractiveness. It is, as some might say an accurate album, well envisioned and excellently interpreted, which means... a brilliant! Ancient Hordes, Kraaiennestraat II, 3290 Diest, Belgium. Rating: 0.89/1 (2001)

ANTAEUS(FRA)-"De Principii Evangelikum" CD'02 (27. 51 min, 10 tracks) (OSMOSE)

This very band could be considered "cult" since, during almost 8 years of existence, preferred staying behind underground. The style they approached has not been altered in any possible way by all modern Metal torments... and this is a noteworthy fact. Therefore, we can speak about a fusion of INCANTATION and SADISTIK EXECUTION in a Raw Black Metal version, which means: an extremely brutal and satanic technique. I don't find it special, not for these times, but if we take a look from its stylistic orientation, it is undeniable that ANTAEUS conceive an accurate remarkable Black/Death Metal and this album is just a follow-up for the "Cut Your Flesh & Worship Satan". There are a lot of interesting details regarding this French band but if you desire for more just visit their site <http://cyfaws.free.fr>. Rating: 0.79/1 (17.08)

ANTIMATTER(UK)-"Saviour" CD'02 (52. 13 min, 11 tracks)

(THE END)

I do remember I received this album a year and half ago from Duncan Patterson (ex-ANATHEMA), when his project signed with an Austrian label. I don't know what happened in between but it seems like the material shocked immediately the whole metal scene, so that it is now released in America under The End label and in Europe under an Austrian label. In comparison with the initial version, the new CD encloses as well 2-bonus track "Over Your Shoulder" and "Flowers", but in an acoustic edition with Danny Cavannagh (ANATHEMA) as guest. For those who have not listened to the album I assure you Duncan and Michael Moss advance an experimental sound, Dark Orchestral Ambient Electronic, with female passionate voice and, here and there, a melodic calm male one. I cannot deny there are all over fragments of ANATHEMA and hues of PORTISHEAD and all in all the entire sound embraces a sad melancholic measurement. I am not in the position of really understanding why this album meant such a revolution but perhaps there are as well enough reasons I just didn't perceive. Besides this, I actually can promise and guarantee that "Over Your Shoulder" sounds superb in the natural version as well as in the acoustic one! For the rest...I can only say: an introspective fusion with Electro-Pop rhythms and strong roots in commercial Rock. <http://warp9.to//antimatter> Rating: 0.79/1 (21.09)

APHELION(UK)-"I-VI" CD'01 (33. 50 min, 6 tracks) (IRIS LIGHT)

Stuart Antis is a guitar player star since "Vempire" album and up to "From Cradle To Enslave", which is CRADLE OF FILTH. But what is here has nothing to do with Black Metal or Industrial. It is an Electronic music with various distortions and seldom with a computerized female voice embracing oriental Tibetan valences... I understood nothing from this music and I am afraid I am as sceptical for the following days too. It is something else, a different musical style hard to be perceived and accepted for my tastes... perhaps it is experimental or maybe Techno having as background a computerized sound in guidance of the keyboard, with a staccato rhythm... sometimes chaotic noisy and confusing. In other words, Stuart's project promotes a complex and knotty Techno/Electronic material listenable solely depending on the moods you have. Rating: 0.71/1 (01.11)

APOTHEOSIS(MAL)-"Farthest From The Sun" CD'02 (50. 58 min, 4 tracks) (NOCTURNAL ART)

I've heard of this computerized project of Sauron, a long time ago, and I actually wanted to check if it is as good as TARTAROS. Well, the mixture of Symphonic, Epic Black and Thrash Metal is classy and tracks are extremely long and complex. In fact, the first track is an intro of 7 minutes, rather wire-drawn and ultra-extended. The next couple of tracks go beyond 12 minutes each, are full of bombastic atmosphere, here and there some medieval shades and sounds imitating traditional instruments and they also were included on Promo tape, 1997 but not that re-arranged and mastered with such elegant sound... The last track, "Kingdom", seems to be the most elaborated one as its musical structure is a continuous line full of attractive

effects. It doesn't sound bad at all, although the aggressive voice rather bored me and, even if there are brilliant ideas, the sound performed and resulted solely on computer is a synthetic one... Sauron's effort is remarkable but I believe these four tracks would have sounded good as well if being more succinct since some passages are repetitive and exhausting. APOTHEOSIS is just another hybrid of computerized Black Metal and perhaps we shouldn't be so fastidious next to a debut! There are too many bands that try to prostitute their musical style just for commercial sake, which is money. Sauron didn't look for such and I have reasons to believe neither he will as far as his stylistic direction remains Majestic Sumptuous Elaborate Modern Black Metal belonging to The Third Millennium! Interesting but nothing else... Rating: 0.78/1 (27.06)

ARCTURUS (NOR)-"The Sham Mirrors" CD'02 (43. 18 min, 7 tracks) (AD ASTRA/THE END)

There are no words for me to describe how anxious I was to listen to this album... All metallic mass media noised about the legendary Norwegians' intention to release new tracks and this time at their own label... Well, here they come... after the masterpiece "La Masquerade Infernale", released in 1997, ARCTURUS regains their position this year with a more metallic and symphonic album, Dark as well and progressive but in lack of that theatric avant-garde touch with which they mesmerized and captured our attention five years ago. Steinar Sverd Johnsen is indeed a veritable maestro at keyboard while Hellhammer continues to amaze me when the battery is the issue! Garm makes the proof of multiple inflexions of his voice and all seems to sound synchronized! Knut M.Valle's guitars intelligently "communicate" with Dag F. Gravem's bass so that I must say the entire metallic sound is outlined by these two



musicians. On "Radical Cult", the most aggressive track of the album, features Ihsahn's voice... the symphonic Black atmosphere seems to end into a few fantastic futurist tunes while the innovative keyboard becomes again the strong point. There is indeed a very special track for our excitement, "For To End Yet Again" as it definitely is the most appropriate example and testimony of these gifted musicians' virtue. If I had to make a comparison with the former albums well, I would appreciate that "The Sham Mirrors" situates somewhere between with the

remark that the musicians' skilfulness is much better outlined now unfortunately against inspiration and improvement. In other words, tracks tend not to be united while the final note is rather the result of a sequences sum and not of a conceptual album well arranged and structured. I have no explanation why, after listening to the album for more than ten times, my impression is that ARCTURUS rather rushed into conceiving this new material... or maybe they reserved not enough time in finishing the albums' details! Though I must notice that the spatial cosmic dimension keeps on embracing the whole musical atmosphere so that the staccato rhythms (from time to time in Viennese waltz style) wavelike yet in the same time extreme confer the same certain charm ARCTURUS used us with. I guess these were all the comments. Otherwise, the album is an exceptional one presented and performed at the highest level. ARCTURUS' hallucinating Dark Black Metal simply admits no comparison with any other band... maybe, when certain conventional parts are implied, solely with old EMPEROR... ARCTURUS remains ARCTURUS and their music can never be confounded as it is just one of a kind! If you feel like listening to a sample of aggressiveness matured strangely with high melodiousness, a little avant-garde and plenty of progressive, all structured on classical background, in Chopin manner yet following a metallic line... well the new ARCTURUS is available! WINDS and ARCTURUS seem to be the bands of the spring and, for me, such audition brought into being a very special mood. I hope for you the same to happen... Rating: 0.95/1 (24.03)

ARHETIP (ROM)-"Cosmic Aboriginals" MCD-R'02 (20. 46 min, 7 tracks) (AXA VALAHA)

In this present case, the music created on computer tends to capture my interest, but there is no way to fascinate me, just because the simple combination between trip-hop, trance and neo-industrial Dark make of ARHETIP a pale shapeless experiment. The intents and ideas seem to look OK, yet I feel to say that it is rather impossible for just a few effects and drums' noises to impose in front of some Romanian projects such as THY VEILS, ARCHAOS or DIVINE MUZAK. All in all I believe that the name is something to remember about and the reason must be simply because we might have why! Rating: 0.63/1 (10.02)

ARMAGEDDA (SWE)-"The Final War Approaching" CD'02 (40. 30 min, 8 tracks) (BREATH OF NIGHT/MERCILESS)

Here it comes another version rather more pleasant of brutality although the originality chapter does not deserve a mark to pass the exam. This Swedish band reminds me of DARK THRONE's first Black Metal album and I must confess that the grim & underground note placed me somewhere about 10 years ago. The band was founded in 2000 under VOLKERMORD name and the demo tape recorded in 30 samples only determined Deathcult Production to offer them a contract for a split together with SVARTHIMN. In other words, Black Metal in Nordic style is brought again in the attention by JEHOVAS HELL (the meaning of the band's name) while the product of the

two (recently have become three) might be interesting but only for a very few auditions. Let us see what future can bring since the debut is to be noticed but nothing else or more! Rating: 0.73/1 (03.03)

ARRIVAL (FIN)-“An Abstract of Inertia” CD’02 (35.00 min, 8 tracks) (EDGERUNNER)

When Jon informed me that his label signed with a new Finnish Black metal project I thought to myself that once again fashion must leave a fingerprint on the point of choosing a band. Well, in this particular case, only half it is true. ARRIVAL is not a project of some debutants and their music sounds really fresh pleasant and full of energy with ARCTURUS shades! There is a mixture of Black and Dark Metal into a very melodious modern even avant-garde sketch, with a lot of keyboard and atmosphere. It seems like these musicians from FLAUROS and OBSESSIVE ART have finally proved their true value and thus these new pieces sound absolutely charming. The voice is unfortunately common extreme and screaming, perhaps too perplexing and less inspired yet perfect for some Black Metal fans’ taste. It is curious that, although I am tired of common unimaginative Metal, this debut fascinated me from the first time I listened to, in spite of that almost already classical approach of modern Black Metal. It must be their first important step they actually did and, in time, I believe this indulgence of debut would disappear if the Finnish worked out a little at the concept issue as well as in the sound structure. In other words, it is about a great performance of a simplistic conception. www.arrival.cjb.net. Rating: 0.77/1 (16.02)

ASGAROTH(ESP)-“Red Shift” CD’02 (58.07 min, 11 tracks) (PEACEVILLE)

“The Quest For Eldenhor” was the MCD I listened to back in 1996 and I actually liked it. It was about a trendy Bombastic Atmospheric Black Metal well interpreted and performed. Later after, “Trapped In The Depths Of Eve” debut and MCD “Absence Spells Beyond” followed but did not reach much of an appreciation. “Red Shift” comes up as an addition of ASGAROTH’ history and I find this material the most complete and innovative of all. Even if released in 2000 and re-edited now at Peaceville, the album develops a timeless sound, the Death Metal basis is penetrated of many strange atmospheric parts and of Black or Thrash elements as well. Miscellaneous vocals, a pretty knotty rhythm and a keyboard guiding the ear’s delight from melodiousness to brutality must be the most important aspects...pretty interesting tracks... I usually enjoy listening to something out of regular patterns and ASGAROTH proved to be so. There are some classical interludes of a clear voice that actually charms at an instant. If the four Spanish musicians elaborated such almost two years ago, I am curious how would a recent album sound in 2002?! Time shall tell. The CD also consists of a simplistic yet spicy video-track. Rating: 0.78/1 (23.10)

ASHES TO ASHES(NOR)-“Cardinal VII” CD’02 (58.54 min, 11 tracks) (DVS)

I kept wondering for some time when these Norwegian might release a new album...“Shapes Of Spirits” came into

sight in 1998 and, even if it was released with personal financial support, was very well viewed and in consequence DVS offered them this very contract. I wouldn’t say that the present Metal performance of the four is quite different from the first album but the progressive note definitely became the key-point. Kenneth Brastad’s voice is now much more diverse which a significant addition to the sound is. The instruments originally run through Gothic, Heavy and Atmospheric having as result a well-rounded, carefully conceived and well interpreted album. After a first audition, “Cardinal VII” seems just OK... but if you try to listen to it, once again, well, you’ll be surprised to find more other intriguing elements, so that there is a certain musical charm outlined. However I am not fascinated by this kind of Progressive (I have one exception: WINDS) I didn’t mind to listen to this material... maybe because I met passages reminding me of GODSEND,

find out in my last issue. Now the three girls brought a new Epic Black Metal opus, more pretentious and atmospheric than all they ever composed: a good album no matter which angle you see it-quality recording, professional mastering and irreproachable execution! This is a kind of replica to “Non Serviam” with many resembling parts, even few identical riffs and a catching melodiousness. It is true that the vocals don’t reveal a feminine source and neither handling the instruments doesn’t. I tell you, not even after a vigilant audition the weak points don’t show up. This is a real surprise for my tastes and although beneficiary of voiced help from Spiros/SEPTIC FLESH and a support at keyboard from Iraklis/SWAN CHRISTY, it amazes me both with such creative manner of performing and presentation. The Epic dimension is set off due to a certain harmony between guitars and drums while the synth has a part in entertaining the sonorous

site.cjb.net/ Rating: 0.88/1 (23.11)

ATROX (NOR)-“Terrestrials” CD’02 (67.52 min, 10 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

If “Contentum” was a problematical album, then the new tracks must be at least inaccessible for most of people! Experimental Doom Schizophrenic Progressive and Technical Metal! Monika’s voice is astounding and so is her synth. There is no rhythm, no melodiousness, everything is waving and in shadows... there are only echoes... I am afraid that the sound of ATROX has become too soft for my ears in spite of the fact that this band is one of my favourite. There is required a certain mood in order to listen to and to comprehend such music! I definitely am not blind and I cannot help myself from noticing the album’s cover, painted by Monika herself in the same manner she used us with, yet much more overwhelming. I believe that what we see on the cover is what ATROX values in approaching music. Let us see what the Norwegian quartet has to offer from now on, under Code 666 label. Rating: 0.72/1 (19.02)

AUTUMN CLAN(AUT)-“Requiem To The Sun” CD’02 (53.43 min, 14 tracks) (WAB)

The Austrian scene lately insists on Gothic Rock and it seems like this young label preference is more likely oriented towards a rather domestic music. This very quartet is just at the debut, after three well received demos yet not quite properly brought into mass media attention. Having some connection with BLACK PROPHECY (Death Metal) or DARKSIDE (Dark Metal), AUTUMN CLAN is adept of a commercial Rock with a normal clear calm and enjoyable voice, the sound has certain Metallic openings but rather Gothic and instrumental division practically reminds me of CEMETARY or even PARADISE LOST. I actually enjoyed the material, at a first audition, as it sounds good, pretty rhythmic and probably perfect for a recital. From stimulation point of view... I guess it is full stop which is the same for the stylistic identity. But, in the end, it is just a band with a commercial sound which, due to its style, might attract simplistic melodic Gothic Rock fans’ attention. Rating: 0.75/1 (17.07)

AXAMENTA (BEL)-“Codex Barathri” CD’02 (44.53 min, 9 tracks) (THE LSP)

The Belgium label refers to CRADLE or DIMMU... So far away from reality, although the orientation is resembling. Alas, this complex amalgam of Fantasy Horror Black Metal with epic or symphonic frames did not enthrall me, though there is plenty of atmosphere. There is nothing here to sound bad, but I find too many bands recently following the same contour. There are melodiousness, atmosphere well structured on a Black Metal lead by intense keyboard and an incisive battery... demonic ordinary voice and rather also boring guitars... A debut that shall pass unobserved. <http://users.pandora.be/axamenta>. Rating: 0.77/1 (31.03)

AZAGATEL (POR)-“Nautilus” CD’02 (44.05 min, 9 tracks)

I do appreciate, and so should anyone, each intention of a band to promote itself by own means as I find in it a proof of seriousness which reflects into what they do. It is the case of this



IN THE WOODS... or even METALLICA. Satisfying or modest, boring or outstanding, you should decide for yourself! Rating: 0.72/1 (14.06)

ASTARTE(GRE)-“Quod Superius, Sicut Inferius” CD’02 (66.16 min, 10 tracks) (BLACK LOTUS)

About “Rising From Within”, the second album of this band, you could

result! ASTARTE plays nothing new and probably ROTTING CHRIST etalon is the first adjacent association to the Greeks’ sound. Nevertheless, the atmosphere is far from being common, full of dynamism and melodiousness but “speaking” in a first class Black Metal language. After seven years of existence, beginning under the name of LLOTH, ASTARTE actually impresses now with this third and best album of their history. Excellent! [audio reviews](http://astarte-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Lusitanian sextet that released, this year, their second material and this time a whole CD. I cannot say their music is singular or unusual, yet I am sure when affirming that the melodic Black Metal joins tunelessly symphonic epic, Viking elements as well as extreme brutal refrains. So, we enter a dimension of atmospheric Black Metal, very rhythmic and entertaining, in old style of HEAVENWOOD, full of dynamism and various and multiple tunes. There is featured **TORMENTOR**, "Elisabeth Bathory" cover version excellently performed and framed. I find it a pleasant surprise and I think this album might have been easily released by any obscure label. An outstanding lay-out and artwork, a flourishing album...when picturing the entire sound facet!
<http://planeta.clix.pt/azagatel> Rating: 0.77/1 (31.03)

BATTLELORE (FIN)-"... Where The Shadows Lie" CD'02 (47. 05 min, 9 tracks) (NAPALM)

I should have written much more about this band if taking in account the fact it was founded in 1996 yet I had not pretty good reasons since during this period they only succeeded to record just two demos "Warrior's Tale" and "Dark Fantasy". It seems like "Dark Fantasy" made a fine impression since **BATTLELORE** has signed for Napalm. The major advantage of this sound is the fact you cannot confound with no other bands as everything breathes originality and a certain comfort. I really do not know where to frame these debutants music: Black Metal or Gothic... it is difficult to define their music because of the great variety of the sound. The aggressive voice, often bothering, alternates with two female voices and a few other technical effects, the melodic parts are abundant while the keyboard seems to be intelligently used even if it solely cannot fill entirely the background despite of some heavy guitars and epic rhythmic tunes. This debut comes along with a superb cover and I need to discern that the atmosphere created by modern Rock passages might reach a high impact to all extreme melodic Metal consumers!
Rating: 0.75/1 (10.02)

BESEECH (SWE)-"Souls Highway" CD'02 (51. 42 min, 11 tracks) (NAPALM)

LACUNA COIL or **THEATRE OF TRAGEDY** fans shall definitely be satisfied with the latest album of this old Swedish project. If on "...from a bleeding Heart" the Gothic Metal was a common one, relatively modest, on the next album, "Black Emotions" **BESEECH** straggled to a commercial Electro Pop that disappointed almost everybody. It seems like signing with Napalm brought the new members back with the feet on the ground and therefore the male voice really strong and low perfectly and fortunately understood to contrast with the female one. There are all kinds of tunes, from old **THE GATHERING** till **TYPE O NEGATIVE**, an atmospheric keyboard and a common commercial even boring battery. I would be mistaken if valuing these new series in bad manner because the return to Gothic Metal was actually the best and wisest decision while the choice of the new male voice provides a certain tonality and perhaps a specific colour to the sound. Unfortunately, what these musicians play now was en vogue three years ago... yet who knows, maybe Napalm

does indeed and to be sincere it really manages to promote its bands better than other labels! I need to say as well that the cover version of **ABBA's** "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme" sounds extremely strange. robert@beseech.net. Rating: 0.76/1 (25.03)

BETO VASQUEZ (ARG)-"Infinity" CD'02 (50. 12 min, 11 tracks) (DRAKKAR)

If being more precise, I must say that **Beto Vasquez** comes from Nepal and their popularity is granted by **Nems Enterprises'** promotion. The album's lay-out is in deed exquisite and so are the guest-artists so that it makes a strong impression from a first glance: **Candice Night** (**BLACKMORE'S NIGHT**), **Tarja Turunen** (**NIGHTWISH**), **Sabine Edelsbacher** (**EDENBRIDGE**), three incredible voices whose live appreciation enjoys quite a great success. Yet I must say this is only the beginning of a surprise since on the other side we meet instrumentalists of great value as well and here they are: **Jorg Michael** (**STRATOVARIOUS**) and **Fabio Liane** (**RHAPSODY**). I assume you have already made an idea regarding the band's direction as oscillating between Power, Heavy and Progressive Metal, with a powerful atmospheric note as well as with South American traditional tendencies so that **Beto Vasquez** manages to put together a vivid proof of skillfulness and inspiration. It is a digestible album with a commercial harmonious and rhythmical sound, an intense keyboard and Metal riffs perhaps in the view of a **Mike Oldfield** Heavy version. Although it is not my favourite style, the recording clarity and craftsmanship of these trained musicians determine me to bow my respects towards them! In deed it is a true pleasure to listen to such edible sound yet only if not for a long time. The positive spectre rather characterized by extremely vivid colours is not quite on my taste although the saxophone's sound during "Through Times Part III" truthfully makes my heart weep! I might not be exactly the right person to appreciate properly the actual value of this album but I know for sure it is hard to found a musical project when are involved artists from Nepal, Austria, England, Finland or Italy.
www.bvinfinity.com.ar Rating: 0.75/1 (09.02)

BLACKDEATH (RUS)-"Saturn Sector" CD'02 (47. 15 min, 13 tracks) (ISO666)

It seems like this label is exclusively dedicated to Raw Black Metal bands. Well, now we are talking about an assortment of **DARK THRONE** cu **MAYHEM**, in a Russian manner with no sense but a primitive noise in lack of any sort of creativity. The ex-**DRAUGWATH** have nothing to bring new or to impress, on contrary I'd say... and at a certain point the sound even becomes pathetic for these times we're living in. Maybe there are some of you to be pleased of this Apocalyptic Black Metal... for me it is just another dead band no matter it actually is active for almost seven years now. This name completes the list of bands in lack of originality or muse.
www.nork.ru/blackdeath/ Rating: 0.66/1 (30.09)

BLOOD RED THRONE (NOR)-"Monument Of Death" CD'01 (38. 41 min, 9 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

I have no idea why in this particular period deciding to write about this album especially in view of the fact that I have it since September. Perhaps because I was not so enchanted by the **SATYRICON** (Tchort and Dod) ex-guitars players' performance, at least not as far as **Death Metal** is concerned. I would not desire for you to believe this album sound bad or it is not a good quality one! It is just that I wanted to hear more Black tunes and perhaps in a more personal technique, not simply American **Death Metal** in approach of old **DEICIDE**, **CANNIBAL CORPSE**, **OBITUARY** or **AUTOPSY**. Guitars are extremely fast while the drums develop an almost transmissible energy and the aggressive voice generates an apocalyptic atmosphere. The artwork is an extreme one even horror and I understood there were quite some problems of censoring in several countries. Probably, Tchort decided to go on with what he started in 1999 with **IN THE WOODS**... yet after choosing for **EMPEROR**, he orientated much more towards progressive horizons. Intriguing or not, Tchort expresses on this album a brutal side of the music he conceived composed and preformed and I do not see any reason you should not decipher it by yourselves. Although there is nothing new, **BRT** reminds of another Norwegian band that sounded in the beginning in the same way, even if "Souls Journey" passed for many as a not one of the best **DARK THRONE** album. Well, in this particular case we can enjoy only a debut material! Rating: 0.72/1 (07.02)

BLOODSHED (SWE)-"Inhabitans Of Dis" CD'02 (41. 26 min, 11 tracks) (CODE666)

One of my reviews praised the activity of the Italian label and the quality judgment when selecting bands to promote. Well, well, I guess this time I have no clue for understanding what in the world could be the place of a Swedish band at **Code666**? Furious fast **Death/Black Metal**, demonic voice, murderous battery and characteristic elements for 90's Metal underground... If it were to speak solely about the performing part, I'd say the five musicians are just fine, they keep the rhythm and the instruments under control but we entered already the third Millennium! Shall we still impress with messages such "crush, kill, destroy and re-kill"? Perhaps 10 years ago an album of this kind would have been devoured. Today... I wonder how many nostalgic persons would risk listening to **BLOODSHED**? I wouldn't! Moreover, a significant issue is that the band comes from Sweden, a beehive of **Black/Death Metal** bands! Well, as it suits you... as the most upset and deranged of you have the chance to enjoy another sample of Metallic violence and fastness a little out of time and place if referring to nowadays!!!
www.bloodshed.info Rating: 0.72/1 (24.09)

BRAVE (USA)-"Searching For The Sun" CD'02 (48. 00 min, 11 tracks) (DARK SYMPHONIES)

Everybody praises these Americans' activity. Their debut, entitled "Before an Audience of Stars", had unexpected great sales as the former name, **ARISE FROM THORNS**, brought them quite good luck. Finally, the four changed the name into **BRAVE** and, after "Waist Deep In Dark Waters" EP, release this album, enjoying great support and promotion from **Dark Symphonies**. More progressive and Pop than the

previous one rather more technical and thorny with a lot more Power shades, the new material is still focused on female voice, Rock rhythms slowly replacing Gothic Metal so that the sound becomes more commercial and less mysterious...in **THE GATHERING** style. It wouldn't be fair to say that the album is a modest one but I cannot praise it either. With no energy or vigour, **BRAVE** is in possession of few meditative passages and great melodiousness, that is probably why this band can only impose in front of those who admire calm relaxing Rock music. Rating: 0.71/1 (25.06)

CALLENISH CIRCLE (HOL)-"Graceful... yet Forbidding" CD'01 (68. 11 min, 15 tracks) (EDGERUNNER)

I finally came to listen to an intriguing material. Although as far as the orientation is concerned, the Dutch band brings no news, the method of combining metallic styles is a very successful one so that the entire album's atmosphere is magnificent imposing and sober; full of verve and force. If "Drift Of Empathy" passed unobserved, the new material simply produced the band's well deserved acknowledgement so that this very album is already released under **Metal Blade** mark. All who desire for hearing more of **Black**, **Thrash**, **Doom**, **Death Metal** in a full of energy manner should choose for this CD as it might be an appropriate choice. A little of a technical detail: this very CD includes as well "Escape" MCD, therefore everything tends and tempts for buying the product! www.callenish-circle.com. Rating: 0.80/1 (10.03)

CANAAN (ITA)-"A Calling To Weakness" CD'02 (71. 17 min, 17 tracks) (EIBON)

This is another album I really anxiously and with great confidence waited to be released! Why so? Perhaps because **Mauro** proved all these years that music "embodied" the most significant artistic expression in his life! The musical debut, under **RAS ALGETHI** banner continues to be one of the most elegant **Doom Dark Metal** albums I ever listened to and it seems like the new sound returns to its origins. I wouldn't necessarily say as form/outward appearance but rather from the fundamental point of reference since the melancholic aura definitely is the key element of the fourth **CANAAN** album. Of course, it is impossible for acoustic interludes and an intricate mixture of **Ambient** with **Industrial** and **Neo-Classical** to be absent...there can be spoken as well of short knotty tracks rather too introverted than the rest of. What I've always appreciated and loved at **CANAAN** was the hospitable atmosphere created by the instruments and having as basis the slow rhythms accompanied by a clear calm voice, sometimes whispered, rather graver and even sadder than I ever heard it. Although the album seems to be better than the last two, "Blue Fire" maintains to be the most imposing and mysterious one of **CANAAN** saga. The keyboard still has the major part and some openings, dominated as a secondary effect by prolonged guitars, remind me of first **DECORYAH** album. The meditation status and a dreaming dimension are the characteristic attribute of the authentic musical concept. Once again, there are hoots,

roars, bizarre effects, religious choirs, sombre ingredients and depressive ones. The CANAAN atmosphere is one of paradox where melancholia and regret weirdly meet each other within a romantic emotion... one that struggles for death and life to shadow a ravishing realm of darkness in lack of hope... and I don't know if it is about Metal, Dark, Wave or Ambient... I only am acquainted with a certain unique structure of Depressive Metal much better outlined by melodic digestible and remarkable influences during each song of this journey. I notice as a negative aspect the tracks length since 5-6 minutes for me are not sufficient to enter the universe of each single succession. Is it maybe just an impression of mine? Did I perhaps wish for more? All in all, this is an album deserving each single effort and penny in order to have it and this could be an eye-opener for those who haven't yet listened to CANAAN. I found extremely melancholic and in the same time somehow like a dead march (oh, dear... how weirdly it sounds!!!) "Frequency Omega", the penultimate track, which probably is the most brilliant and illustrative for what this Italian quartet was once! In exchange, I believe the last track, "A Last Lullaby", is definitely a real stupid fixation, a kind of sad novelette having nothing in common with anything... just an embarrassing "aiulululu...", some lyrics chanted in a manner rather cumbersome for my ears and a monotonous linear keyboard. www.eibonrecords.com Rating: 0.89/1 (30.11)

CARPE TENEBRUM (NOR)-
"Dreaded Chaotic Reign" CD'02 (46.07 min, 9 tracks)

(HAMMERHEART)
Astenuu (ex DIMMU BORGIR and THE KOVENANT) has decided to return to his roots and to present the third solo album in a purely Death Metal manner. I would say it is a pity if thinking of the previous albums... The intelligent Black Metal was replaced exclusively with excessive brutality and rage and there is nothing else. The sound became now a common linear and boring one after no more than two consecutive auditions while the voice remained Black. I have no idea of what Astenuu intended to point out with this very new material... perhaps it is just an deference to Chuck Schuldiner... Rating: 0.67/1 (02.04)

CARRIER FLUX(USA)-"In Waste"
CD'02 (41.47 min, 11 tracks)

(BLACK LOTUS)
Aha... too complex for classical, much too chaotic for avant-garde, rather boring for critics and possibly interesting for the artists... how does it sound? Well, this is how I understand to "define" this solo project's sound based on a confusing Metal configuration that oscillates between melody and brutality, Gothic, Industrial, Death on one hand and even Black Metal on the other so that a tiny shy symphonic memo can hardly be noticed. So does the voice... reaching different stages, from calm and clear to extreme and highly violent levels. Jeff Phillips has definitely made a huge effort to release this second album but I am afraid that the entire musical concept is rather much too introverted and convoluted for my poor ears... The idea (the best I could actually taste) seems to be OK but nevertheless the stylistic abundance and hues' diversity as well pretty confuses me in spite of the fact that

Originality, one thing I adore and cherish the most, indeed is the key point of the sound. Maybe you'll have a dissimilar vision next to this album, who knows? By all means it is worth to try tasting it though it might depend on the mood you are at that instant. I do confess, I found not the required patience for prolonged auditions! Rating: 0.78/1 (23.11)

CARVED IN STONE(GER)-"The Forgotten Belief"
MCD'02 (22.22 min, 6 tracks)

(SCHWARZDORN)
Well, this is a surprise! The solo project of one known as Swawa seems to be a very inspired one, full of interesting ideas and governed by a meditative dreaming aura. If you prefer what Andrea/HAGALAZ/RUNEDANCE or CORONA BOREALIS performs, then CARVED IN STONE most certainly would help in continuing the experience of following your own ego and entity deeply inside yourselves. The activity of this character is actually pretty unknown if we take in account that bands like DARK INTENTION or TAUNUSHEIM still say not much for the public. Unlike the other Nordic Folk bands, CARVED IN STONE is strongly orientated towards medieval and even ballad and the balmy female voice has a major role for such, one that dominates the entire sound. The peaceful sound confers a certain mood of tranquility, but the mystical shades, perhaps based on fiction approach, plainly enter and vibrate inside a Nordic mythology universe... so that, in the end, the final sound outlines a Dark Ambient aura which can be often found at Pagan bands. I really have not a single idea of this band's future but if I ever were asked I would strongly recommend for any specialized label to trust CARVED IN STONE potential since... in the most pessimistic perspective, there still would be nothing to lose! MCD appeared in a limited edition of 500 samples and features a professional booklet following the same line as the entire musical concept. One single remark: lyrics, both in English and German represent another specific facet of SWAWA's music. www.schwarzdorn.de Rating: 0.85/1 (17.08)

CHALICE (AUS)-"An Illusion to the Temporary Real"
CD'01 (45.10 min, 7 tracks)

(MODERN INVASION)
I was reading, one of these days, on the band's site Guestbook, that there were some opinions criticizing Shiralee's feminine voice coming from someone who took canto lessons. It seems like polemic is in ascendance over there so, if you desire having fun on such issue try www.thehaliceroadie.cjb.net and soon www.chalice.mu. Now, back to music, CHALICE comes in forth with their second album by all means not original yet tremendously attractive. I haven't listened to the first album so I am not in the position of comparing, which leaves me no choice, but to focus on this very album's characteristics: a mixture of Gothic Metal with Doom, very tranquil Atmospheric, a voice palely reminding me of THE 3RD AND THE MORTAL (Shiralee), a peaceful flute apt to create a certain mood of meditation, guitars' Rock, Gothic and Metal tunes, melancholic passages and romantic rhythms. The sound misses a confident strength, as the only limelight might be the flute closely followed by the female voice. If regarding it as a unitary whole, the album has nothing

new to show, nothing in particular since everything is a replica of European Gothic Metal sound in the manner of Stavanger/Norway's bands yet much more serene featuring also a few psychedelic tints. I found pretty curious that the seven tracks managed somehow to arouse my interest and even determined me to listen to the album for several times consecutively. It is noticeable the fact we can also enjoy pleasant Gothic Metal from the kangaroos' continent! Rating: 0.82/1 (13.01)

CHILDREN OF BODOM (FIN)-
"Follow The Reaper" CD'01 (41.09 min, 10 tracks)

(NUCLEAR BLAST/ROCRIS DISC)
The Finnish band enjoyed quite a short ride in order to reach the top and this merit is half of the band, half of the label, which did an extraordinary job massively promoting it. I will not refer to the band's history since everybody knows it well. I prefer taking a glance to the band's new orientation. Most definitely, instead of the Atmospheric and Mystic, fresh tunes, alert rhythms, plenty of Heavy and some Black Metal took control of the music. The sound is an exceedingly good and enjoyable one, entertaining for home audition as well as for live performances. The tracks are simple but they strike you directly in your belly, due to ravishing guitars and the remarkable Metal voice; it is rather completely Speed or Heavy Metal. The album itself did not disappoint me but the manner COB decided to approach music now. I still do prefer their first album. In other words, Finnish play now exactly the music that can bring big money. Although professional, unfortunately the commercial-instrumental note rules the new sequences while Alex & Co practically left the underground zone, even if that was what made them famous a few years ago. The future sound good, don't you think? Rating: 0.81/1 (2001)

CHRISTIAN DEATH(USA)-"Lover Of Sin"
CD'02 (44.32 min, 10 tracks)

(CANDLELIGHT)
I never understood this bizarre project and thus I cannot say I number myself along the constant listeners or fans! Maitri and Valor's defective and sick minds brought up now a sample of secluded Dark Metal with as various as controversial musical guiding marks: KORN, MARILYN MANSON, CRADLE OF FILTH, MINISTRY, TYPE O NEGATIVE, AMEN, STATIC X or even MORBID ANGEL! Progressive Power touches (if there is about such!) belong to Diamond Jinya' voice, an ex-SAVATAGE. This is definitely not my kind of music or preference, which is why I only choose to mention the appearance but nothing else. Rating: 0.71/1 (23.11)

CORNIX MALEDICTUM (GER)-
"...verdamm in alle Ewigkeit"
CD'02 (42.27 min, 11 tracks)

(ARS METALLI)
Perhaps I should have known more about this band yet since I don't and the CD is so simple, without a booklet, I have no choice but to promote a band absolutely unknown to me. We probably enjoy a debut album while the band's musical approach is a medieval folk one with Celtic shades and a sound created by traditional instruments, with a clear voice and a pronounced Irish bagpipe. The tracks feature more than a single language and the atmosphere is archaic... so that everything is pleasant-sounding. Well, I

do not know what to say except perhaps the fact it is too soft for my taste yet very agreeable for an audition. Rating: 0.73/1 (18.02)

CORPUS CHRISTII (POR)-"The Fire God"
CD'01 (44.02 min, 9 tracks)

(HIBERICA)
Such violence, hate and rapidity! "Saeculum Domini" represented the Lusitanian duet's debut and I remember that Cyber Ultra fast Black Metal they proved at that time quite shocked me yet not from the conception point of view, but from the excessive fastness one. There are no changes on the second album except the fact Black Metal is now built on a Thrash structure and the last decade trends are often visible to even reach CELTIC FROST as a simple detail, on this album Necrobutter (MAYHEM) features as well and, yes, I now realize "The Fire God" resembles a lot with MAYHEM from Misanthropy Records signing period. Ignix Nox and Nocturnus Horrendus instrumental aptitudes are not to be questioned... it is just that the chaos showed on the new album is much too linear and tracks are too much resembling each one with the other. www.corpuschristii.com. Rating: 0.75/1 (24.02)

CROWHEAD(NOR)-"Frozen"
CD'02 (57.05 min, 11 tracks)

(MY KINGDOM MUSIC)
Francesco Palumbo has decided to open his own label and his first chosen band was another face of SHADOW DANCERS formed by two members of this legendary Norwegian band, Jo-Inge and Oyvind (Rym/RAGNAROK). Briefly: after SHADOW DANCERS split, in 1999, the two released a demo pretty well promoted by Neodawn Productions, titled "Love Letter". This is their history. Rather short but sufficient in order to receive some offers. I'd say that the inedited assortment of Gothic with Dark Wave and Electronic grants the listener with a bitter taste of a sad sober album in which depressive echoes build the sound while electronic effects desperately struggle to impregnate positive shades of light and life...of survival, after all. "Frozen" is an outstanding album and I found hard to believe that the 11 tracks won't collect adequate appreciations even from the most avant-garde fans of such style. Which should be the musical references for those who never listened to CROWHEAD? Let's say: ICON OF COIL, APOPTYGMA BERZERK, SHADOW DANCERS or even THEATRE OF TRAGEDY. www.crowhead.com www.mykingdommusic.net Rating: 0.82/1 (23.11)

CRUACHAN (IRE)-"Ride On"
single
MCD'01 (14.38 min, 4 tracks)

(HAMMERHEART)
If the new album, entitled "Folk-Lore", sounds in "Ride on" track manner, then I can truly announce that CRUACHAN name must be memorized far beyond any doubt. The preceding album, released at Hammerheart, was modest and, although it received several congratulations as quite a success, I do not think of it impressing the most exigent critics of this particular style. "Ride On" should be the most popular traditional Irish track (lyrics by Jimmy Mc Carthy) and this version (including the performance of producer Shane Mac Gowan/THE POGUES) sounds wonderful in deed. I mean little of Metal, some of Rock and Irish elements

(Irish flute, pipes, spoons, mandolin, bodhran), soft female voice, normal clear male one, simple guitars and clear sharp tunes... The other three tracks are rather dull, like embracing no sense at all, just noise with the claim of being Metal Gothic, traditional, commercial... I was not in the position of being certain. The sound is also unreasonably modest though "To Hell or Connaught" has been released as a bonus track for a limited edition of the album "The Middle Kingdom", now remastered... Website: www.cruachan.cjb.net. Rating: 0.59/1 (2001)

CRUACHAN (IRE)-"Folk-lore" CD'02 (45.41 min, 10 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

Not so long time ago, I was referring to this new album as if it sounded in the manner of the track "Ride On", then CRUACHAN would gain some respect and immediate success. The truth is that "Folk-lore" is somewhere between what I desired and what I feared it to be. As far as non-Metal point of view is concerned, the album might be considered a masterpiece since all traditional instruments are capable of transferring the listener back in time throughout certain Celtic shades imprinted on each single tune. Moreover, the female warm voice enters in resonance with the Irish medieval atmosphere while Shane McGowan's clear voice reaches its acme during the "Ride On" track. I might also mention about "Spacill Hill", a track conceived in slower approach than the original one (legendary in Ireland for more than 200 years) yet as charming and captivating as well. As for the Metal perspective, I actually find no praising words or maybe in the case I replace Metal with Rock. If Keith's voice were stronger and not so throaty and the guitars clearer and better mixed, then I might have considered "Folk-Lore" one of the rare successful albums in which Metal (Rock in this very case) joins harmoniously traditional music. Unfortunately, solely the non-Metal dimension colours and charms the aura of CRUACHAN music. I am sure that these new tracks will be well appreciated and eulogized since there are so few to venture in uniting such styles and though the competition is more than shy. Moreover, a good strategy was for John O'Fathaigh, member of the band, to draw up a superb cover and so was the remarkable manner of presenting the tracks while using historical or legendary details simply meant outlining and weighting the CRUACHAN concept. I must say it is an astonishing and shocking album for each Celtic/Irish music devoted listener. Rating: 0.79/1. (13.01)

C.S.S.O. (JAP)-"Are you Excrements?" CD'01 (40.31 min, 6 tracks) (MORBID)

Clotted Symmetric Sexual Organ is the name of a band that, many years ago, in 1995, I believe, debuted with a quite an intriguing album entitled "Nagro Lauxes VIII". I remember a friend of mine recommended me this album and that was to a certain extent amusing for that time. Years have passed by and I assumed the Japanese quitted such job. That was false since Morbid label presents now, after five whole years, CSSO's new album as an inedited amalgamation of Rock and Metal styles from Flower Power to Grind Core. We can benefit of five extended tracks and a short one, pretty noisy yet with a little ambiance too, very originally weaved so

that, here and there, a pleasant sound can be distinguished. It is a compound of music and parody, a Grind Rock that can only be regarded from a conceptual point of view and appreciated through the vision of a project with no limits either musical or textual. Otherwise there is nothing interesting...perhaps just a relish to all persons mad for musical and stylistic experiences. Anyway, these musicians seem not to be mentally healthy. I would really be curious to read some poetry of theirs... Rating: 0.51/1 (13.01)

CURSE (ISL)-"Cursed Be thy Name" MCD'01 (18.38 min, 3 tracks) (NO COLOURS)

I have always had an exquisite respect for this label just because of its underground message of promoting bands such as DIMMU BORGIR (in their earlier times), FORGOTTEN WOODS or GRAVELAND. CURSE provides us three Melodic Black Metal tracks in a computerized very atmospheric manner with an intelligently keyboard and linear guitars. It is much too early for me to drop a conclusion but it seems like CURSE might become the successor of FALKENBACH project. I think it is interesting to go after this foretaste of Atmospheric Island Metal Art! www.no-colours-records.de. Rating: 0.75/1 (13.01)

CYBELE (NOR)-"Interactive Playground" CD'01 (41.18 min, 8 tracks) (VME)

Melancholic Dark Pop Rock! Hmm, outstanding combination! Although it is their third album, CYBELE must have been a band almost unknown until right now in spite of the fact that the entire line-up features solely women. On this new album, the three girls contacted a guy, Ronny Sveen, and present now new tracks rather Pop than Metal yet very rhythmic, less Hard or Heavy but more Rock. If being sincere, I find intriguing the orientation of these women but this is definitely not the kind of music I prefer day by day. Although, for some times, in a bar, or in the car, I assume there is nothing wrong with such audition. Rating: 0.80/1 (19.02)

DAEMUSINEM (ITA)-"Daemusinem Domine Empire" CD'02 (39.41 min, 8 tracks) (COLD BLOOD INDUSTRIES)

There were very few Italian bands who decided to follow the old Swedish Death Metal school line and this is why DAEMUSINEM might be considered an interesting band. The assortment of Melodic Black Metal and Fast Death Metal is quite successful during the entire sound and the keyboard, although modest and simple, definitely colours the tunes in different certain nuances. In exchange, I must reckon, the drummer is the best one in his job as Massimo Altomare is no one else but the collaborator of MORTUARY DRAPE and BLACK FLAME. In different words, the Italian trio features an AT THE GATES mixed with old times IN FLAMES, a little faster and rather much modern. Rating: 0.71/1 (23.02)

DAGORLAD (BEL)-"The End Of The Dark Ages" CD'02 (43.47 min, 10 tracks) (THE LSP)

Well, I lived the day to found a band from Belgium that insists on an orientation rather sophisticated than

technical and SUMMONING, ENID or BAL SAGOTH are only a few stylistic guiding marks. On one hand melodic, dark, epic, atmospheric, on the other... aggressive, futurist heroic medieval... all built on a Black Death Metal-this is the new DAGORLAD sound. The first album, released three years ago, "Incantations" enjoyed a timid achievement after which the entire scene forgot about DAGORLAD. Lucky facts as the new compositions are more carefully envisioned so that the sound is entirely followed by a warlike triumphant sovereign full of atmosphere and magic aura. The male voice oscillates between brutality and clearness while the female one seldom makes its appearance but not bothering! This project is a great surprise and an excellent choice especially for those who are mad about weirdness and complex albums! Sorry to say that the whole sound rather tends to be synthetic as programming is the instrument ready to replace almost any musical accessory! It is a different kind of TARTAROS yet more melodic and futurist, perhaps more epic and, of course, in Belgian version! Excellent! <http://home.tiscalinet.be/dagorlad> Rating: 0.80/1 (25.03)

DARK SANCTUARY (FRA)-"Vie Ephemere" MCD'02 (12.12 min, 2 tracks) (AVANTGARDE)

I want to say that a few years back I was very interested in this band, perhaps because of its stylistic guiding marks that definitely convey to or DEAD CAN DANCE. From the discussion I had with the band's leader, Arkdae, I understood that the new material is supposed to be the more sophisticated ever and complex and as significant sample he pointed out exactly the two tracks included in this very single. What could I tell you about only two tracks? I guess it is a little too earlier to drop conclusions but this MCD aim was definitely reached: I am deadly curious to listen to the new material that will be out in a few weeks! The female opera-voice has a good company in the bombastic keyboard full of Renaissance atmosphere so that a sublime aura for DARK SANCTUARY sound is created! Magnificent! It is somehow a kind of domestic ELEND in a DEAD CAN DANCE symphonic version while the cover...actually perfectly fits into the band's musical point of reference. www.dark-sanctuary.com Rating: 0.91/1 (09.10)

DARKWELL (AUT)-"Conflict Of Interest" MCD'02 (32.25 min, 7 tracks) (NAPALM)

There was quite some time to wait for this new material! After the excellent debut, "Suspiria", in 2000, the Austrians return with a well conceived MCD as far as imagery is regarded but for the quality sound as well. I am not in the position to say if the four new tracks stand for a forward step as far as insight is regarded but it definitely is a superior movement in the performance acceptance. The whole sound is stronger, more Heavy; guitars dominate; Alexandra's voice tends to reach weird inflexions rather awkward, in ATROX manner, and the battery is fantastic since Moritz Neuner is a real artist; we can hear some parts where a clear whispered male voice has a tendency of communicating with the female one. Gothic Metal resulted from the five's elaboration has reached now a

different measurement, the one of Technical/Progressive. I must say that the keyboard seems rather too bombastic, despite of the outstanding atmosphere it creates, and this reminds me of lots of Gothic bands ruled by melodiousness fashion. There is also a Tanita Tikaram cover-version and two tracks from the debut, in live version, from which "Realm Of darkness" really proves to be the most inspired DARKWELL track. For those who want to buy the MCD, Napalm prepared as well two video-tracks live so that, the record definitely is worth the money. www.darkwell.org Rating: 0.90/1 (02.07)

DAWN OF RELIC (FIN)-"Lovecraftian Dark" CD'03 (58.22 min, 14 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

I remember there were a lot of reviews about "One Night Carcosa" debut and mostly because the album was released under EARACHE. Although the Finns are pretty good, the melodic line owns not a personal touch and has nothing impressing. It is just a mixture often used nowadays in melodious Death and Black Metal: full of atmosphere ad interpretative force with electrostatic riffs, bombastic keyboard, rhythmic battery and vocals based on aggressiveness. Of course, there are as well Gothic parts, full of melodiousness in which the vocals become clear and moreover are accompanied by a female voice. What should I say? Perhaps I need to outline that the band started 10 years ago as a faithful disciple of modern Death Metal not being shy in embracing SENTENCED or CHILDREN OF BODOM sonorities and it brings for 2003 an elegant album, nicely prepared, dominated by a catching sound still brutal but perfect for listening to it. It can be spoken of some strength but I am afraid it is not enough of it. Rating: 0.80/1 (09.12)

DEVISION (GER)-"Two" CD'01 (51.03 min, 10 tracks) (E-WAVE/DRAKKAR)

Although the album's launch was on 1st October 2001, I still listen to it with a great pleasure as it is one of the CDs I always have in my car. Do not imagine it must be a Dark masterpiece, not in a million years! It simply is a mixture of Rock, Gothic, Pop and Electronic performed solely by two persons with clear male voice, a lot of rhythms even up to being danced! I found smooth parts that remind me of DEPECHE MODE. "Two" has nothing to do with Metal and that is why neither my presentation has. It is just commercial "warm" comforting music inside of which Electro-Pop dimension has the honour to amaze people and to turn the album into a pleasant audition. The extroverted message of the tracks was successfully carried out and transmitted by Steffen and Thomas while their music can easily gratify anyone interested in fresh tunes, even if being a Rock, Metal or Disco fan. www.devision.de Rating: 0.85/1 (20.02)

DEATH DIES (ITA)-"The Sound Of Demons" CD'02 (49.31 min, 9 tracks) (BLACK TERAS OF DEATH)

I've come to a point when I don't know what to think anymore! There are persons who meet success and then all kind of discussions make room different conflicts so that, in the end, each one follows personal musical projects. This is the case of EVOE's members who, probably governed by Giordano Bruno temper, have decided,

one by one, to leave EVOL on the behalf of DEATH DIES improvement. This very line-up is in a three formula: Demian de Saba (SWEET END'S ANGEL), Rex Tenebrae and Samael von Martin, all ex-EVOL members. On this debut, which was supposed to be released a couple of years ago, are featured as well Banshee (keyb, female voice) and Nicholas (guitar), a quintet reminding me of EVOL's golden age. In essence, DEATH DIES' Black Metal is not so different from EVOL... it is only that there are as well more Progressive elements, a trendy keyboard and an opera female voice. Even if the multitude of tendencies is a real proof of a complex source of inspiration, the sound did not impress me despite all efforts indeed these musicians have made. Their music is dusty, full of anachronistic ideas that might have been catchy 5-6 years ago. All in all, "The Sound Of Demons" is a various album, questionable as far as the recording is regarded, appreciable for the ideas but mediocre in the light of making these ideas come true! Still... it is only a debut...
www.deathdies.cjb.net Rating: 0.77/1 (17.08)

DECAPITATED- "Nihilism" CD'02 (35.05 min, 8 tracks)

(WICKED WORLD/EARACHE)
Once again Death Metal, but this time, in a European Nordic version in the touch of ENTOMBED or SUFFOCATION glorious times. The battery is the sole instrument to be distinguished from the very first times while the other instruments are common in spite of the fast riffs and an aggressive voice. This material is not bad at all in sound and it is possible for the fans to be surprised of these musicians' recital. Perhaps it is also because of such sharp clear recording. Unfortunately, there is nothing else for me to annotate regarding this album.
Rating: 0.62/1 (07.02)

DEIMOS (ROM)- "Death Squad" tape'01 (BESTIAL)

Real value of Death Metal! I just wonder how such album was not released at Hammerheart, Unique Leader or Repulse?! Could it be maybe because it comes from Romania? I am in the position to assure you that, although with simple repetitive background, DEIMOS' sound sends out a fantastic energy, as the strength of the rhythms is the very characteristic element belonging to this quartet. A throaty aggressive voice, destructive battery, pale keyboard, successful guitar parts and solos... everything seems to be in a perfect harmony and synchronization. Yet... something is missing... perhaps diversity or maybe the sound's linearity just bothers. I have no idea! And it matters no more since "Death Squad" definitely is a sample of Romanian Death Metal in the most successful manner and shape which shouldn't miss your personal collection! Of course, I addressed myself to all who still listen to aggressive and brutal music!
t_o_r_r_a@yahoo.com. Rating: 0.77/1 (03.03)

DEINONYCHUS (HOL) - "Mourning" CD'02 (57.35 min, 11 tracks)

(MY KINGDOM MUSIC)
Marco Kehren has reached now the fifth chapter in music and maybe the most darkened and various one, much more mature and better arranged than

all I listened so far. I don't know if it is the best of all as well because "The Silence Of December" still is a genuine sample of high quality Dark Doom Death Metal... and despite of the fact it was released almost 7 years ago... it still preserves the taste of an original approach. The actual sound perseveres in the same Suicidal Dark Metal manner, full of depressive grave passages (SKEPTICISM kind) enclosing as well modern trendy and more rhythmic elements. Marco's

an admirable "Ancient Dreams", namely CANDLEMASS cover-version!
www.doom-metal.com/deinonychus/
Rating: 0.83/1 (23.11)

DEMONS OF DIRT (SWE)- "Killer Engine" CD'02 (35.50 min, 10 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

The ex- ENGRAVED band had the chance of signing with label and what they perform here reminds me of THE HAUNTED. If their fundamental direction is Swedish Death Metal with

the required strength to impose itself simultaneously on two continents. We shall see! Rating: 0.69/1 (23.02)

DENSE VISION SHRINE(NOR)- "Magic & Mystery" CD'02 (50.45 min, 6 tracks) (IRIS LIGHT)

Well, well... such miscellany! Either ARCANES ART or PENITENT but never DENSE VISION SHRINE! Karsten Hamre brings to life again his musical abilities in an artistic approach of high value. This new project is a genuine proof of Dark Ambient mixed with Classical and Electro echoes. There is a melancholia discharged within the six tracks gifted with Epic shades so that the entire sound becomes more acoustic pretentious and out of monotony. The CD includes two multimedia tracks featuring short motion pictures having performed from Horror/sexy sequences to ones of nature perfectly immortalized full of charm and mystery or even religious images with stained glasses, icons, castles, caves... really excellent choices! As it is a synthetic sound, from time to time the meditative message is getting lost but I believe the difference is too pale to be mentioned here! This is an exquisite album, for sure! Rating: 0.85/1 (03.11)

DESTROYER 666 (AUS)- "Cold Steel... For An Iron Age" CD'02 (35.30 min, 9 tracks)

(SEASON OF MIST)
Until now I found no interest in what these Australians made even if their quotation was a very high one especially due to the last album "Phoenix Rising". Their latest release is beyond any expectation; the mixture of brutal rapid and epic Black Metal is excellently interpreted. I even experience nostalgia since it reminds me of "Blood, Fire, Death" or "Hammerheart" BATHORY's famous albums! The guitars' fastness and voice's aggressiveness moves epic Black Metal into Speed Thrash Death Metal sphere, extremely primitive and violent. All in all, this is an album with nothing new yet full of a certain force that harmoniously exhales symmetric waves of plain energy and dynamism! Therefore... Epic Fast Raw Black Metal... quite a weird choice but thriving as well! Rating: 0.79/1 (25.03)

DEVISER(GRE)- "Running Sore" CD'02 (43.25 min, 9 tracks) (THE LSP)

Surprise! I didn't even think these veterans of Greek Black scene are still alive! After two albums released at Mascot Records, DEVISER comes back in forth, in metallic scene, with a new material, more changed and up-dated to modern Black Metal standards. In other words, the five gave up Thrash and Old Black Metal weight and acquaint themselves with atmosphere, melodic and rhythmic aura. Therefore we find violin, female voice, Doom passages... Rather alien ingredients on the former albums, "Unspeakable Cults" or "Transmission To Chaos". Do not think DEVISER lost touch with real things and turned into Disco Black Metal! On a Black background, which reminds me of ROTTING CHRIST first material, with an extreme voice yet quite in harmony with the entire continuance of the sound, the Greeks develop some modern elements in an imaginative manner while the bombastic keyboard is just the metronome of the whole musical structure and concept. It is about a



desperate voice harmoniously communicates with Arkdae's keyboard (DARK SANCTUARY) and Wiliam Sarginson's battery (CRADLE OF FILTH, THE BLOOD DIVINE, DECEMBER MOON). Melancholia and dejection are the only features proficient in characterizing the album's sad essence. The CD booklet is elegant featuring artistic images, enchanting pictures and unique obsessing lyrics. This could be a good confront for depressive Doom Death Metal nostalgic fans. One more thing, there is

many Thrash elements, well, I find interesting the influences of American style, which has the power, in live performances, of agitating the public/fans. It is one of the fewest European bands that managed to successfully and inspiring yet not so specially mix tendencies of two extreme Metal schools originated from two different continents. I also noticed some retro hues, but I suppose these ones are not so en vogue these days. I have no ideas how much this band will survive since it does not seem to have

fresh sound, a volatile rhythm, a terrible strength and a professional performance. Nothing new or avantgardist, just a sound based on the old skeleton of extreme Metal which accepts hardly but intelligently the present Black Metal modernism. A real Cult band for the Greek scene... www.deviser.org Rating: 0.80/1 (27.06)

DEVILIN(SWE)-“Grand Death Opening” CD’02 (44. 23 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)

Marcus Ehlin had planed from long time ago to release a solo album but it seems like SIEBENBURGEN has always captivated his full attention. Well, he finally made room in his life and produced, at the beginning of 2002, a demo that impressed Napalm. I’ve listened and listened to the album for some times and still found not that “sparkle”. It is about a Dark Gothic Metal with a throaty voice (a CREMATORY kind) melting with a nice female one rather not quite belonging to the Metal picture, plenty of rhythm, a bombastic atmosphere created on keyboard and modest simplistic guitars basis, in lack of brilliant interludes. A quality execution, so is the sound, a satisfactory mixing...and this should be all. You might enjoy this Atmospheric Metal as resulted because it is pretty en vogue and after all it doesn’t bother. As far as originality is concerned, Marcus’ project could receive a high mark but this doesn’t go as well for the strength or expressiveness... since there is something rather too dried out. Frankly, this is real! Rating: 0.77/1 (01.11)

DIABOLIC (USA)-“Subterranean Magnitude” CD’01(37.58 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

Inside last two “Kogaionon” issues, I wrote about this famous American band. If “City Of The Dead” MCD and “Supreme Evil” CD showed all Death Metal fans the five musicians are good at studio job, the new tracks bring nothing spectacular or different. I even noticed that the aggressive grace note is fading despite of such demonic voice and the drums which rhythms’ changeability give creeps. I cannot surely know the impact that these new compositions provoke, but I assume that even DIABOLIC fans would prefer, soon after listening to the album, to return to their first tracks. Why so?! More simple than never: Without inspiration and imagination, there is no evolution even if, unfortunately, continuity might exist, in this style-born 15 years ago, when Schuldiner or Benton were even breaking the eardrums of the most fervid Thrash fans. “Subterranean Magnitude” shall be an album with big sales, thanks to the fact it is about an American Death, with a specific layout for such style, dark lyrics, dynamism and a lot of brutality. Fashionable or not, death Metal did not die... at least not for all of us. DIABOLIC, P.O. BOX 9689, Tampa, FL. 33674-9689, USA, www.diabolicblastmasters.com, Rating: 0.65/1 (2001)

DIABOLICUM (SWE)-“The Dark Blood Rising (The Hatecrowned Retaliation)” CD’01 (45. 01 min, 11 tracks) (CODE666)

I remember that right after Napalm Records set this band free of any contractual obligations, Sasrof started

to send messages all over the world referring to its band super-album that was about to be released... yet had no interesting offers from the labels. Code 666 moved fast and I believe it was a wise choice for both sides. Besides the fact it is a multimedia CD containing all kind of data (and the Digipack is exceptional), there is interesting news as various invited guests participated on this album: John Nodveit (DISSECTION) from prison, Dirge Rep (ENSLAVED), Martin & Elena Shirenc (PUNGENT STENCH/HOLLENTON), Wraath (SEETHERIAL/NAGFLAR/BEWITCHE D). Their collaboration is concretized clearly in “The Song Of Suffering” track, an intriguing one rather fractured away from a different chapter, by far having nothing in common with the new album! Otherwise... just Swedish fast Black Metal Old School Death Metal and some tints of Industrial Ambient Noise. The album doesn’t sound bad at all, the interpretation is at least exceptional... still at the innovation point I must declare DIABOLICUM refuses to evolve, in spite of the few experimental elements included here. Well, the most important aspect, after listening to the album, is the energy filling your entity so that it might even help you easily break a wall or any other obstacle in the way! www.diabolicum.cjb.net. Rating: 0.78/1 (09.03)

DISMAL (ITA)-“Dionisiaca” MCD’02 (23. 27 min, 4 tracks) (BEYOND)

This was quite an honest surprise! The theatrics obscure epic line hallows the entire glacial avant-garde atmosphere that was created by an abundant keyboard and a majestic piano... the female voices join the male clear low ones as well as the screamed and extreme ones...there are sad melancholic guitars’ tunes, the violin, cell the bass... everything sounds so depressive and Dark on a Doom Metal background perfectly outlined! Although the music is so diverse, from time to time it gets annoying, yet the final result is rather positive if taking in account we deal with a band with no discography. I only could recall a CD demo, “Our Sad Saga”, the promo “The Holy Prayer Of Shatephyn...” or “Fiaba Lacrimevole”. “A Venere” is an exquisite track with a bleak atmosphere that solely seldom emits optimistic rays so that a strange sensation of a new inner fulfillment appearance is given birth... a forgotten feeling for me lately. It is a pity we can only enjoy four tracks but I promise you a keep my mind posted on a whole album coming from this Italian quartet. The artwork of the Digipack impels for meditation and inward orientation in perfect harmony with DISMAL dimension! Well... an intriguing challenge... Now they signed a deal with Dreamcell11/Code666 label. www.dismal.it. Rating: 0.91/1 (30.03)

DIVERCIA (FIN)-“Modus Operandi” CD’02 (52. 13 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

Well, yes, this was quite an exquisite surprise coming from modern Metal commercial side! In better words, can you imagine a band which successfully and inspiring merges NIGHTWISH, DIMMU BORGIR and HIM? I am not a disciple of bombastic very rhythmic and commercial sound, but when there is something made with talent, I cannot but appreciate it. Therefore here we have: imposing keyboard (in

NIGHTWISH manner), extremely Heavy guitars, a clear and potent voice (in HIM style), and rhythms passing from Gothic to Black Metal...all is mighty, harmonious and more than melodic. I do remember I received the band’s first MCD, three years ago, when their banner was LOST IN TWILIGHT, a material I quite praised in “Kogaionon”. On this album, are featured lent tracks with a ballad aura and Jyri Aarniva’s Pop Rock voice (another kind of David Bowie) actually overflies impressively the entire sound. The last three tracks seem to belong to a distinct chapter as the voice transforms itself here and there in a Black Metal one, the rhythm increases and it is easy to remark that it is about a Finnish sound as inspiring sources were NIGHTWISH, SENTENCED or SONATA ARCTICA... and I might go even further up to DIMMU BORGIR or THE KOVENANT. I wasn’t enchanted by DIVERCIA’s Black sound, but let’s be indulgent as we still speak of a debut! Desire for stylistic colourfulness impregnates any band artistic life, especially if this band is eager to reach a high-speed success! It is impossible for this album not to make waves and I am sure the entire metallic mass media shall see DIVERCIA as “masculine” version of NIGHTWISH. And I tell you there is good reason for such... because, in spite of an extremely commercial and trendy sound, the voice is indeed, inedited! Rating: 0.92/1 (17.07)

DIVINE MUZAK (ROM)-“En-trance” tape’02 (BESTIAL)

As long as the project conceptually belongs to Dan Serbanescu, you can only imagine that the music is in ARCHAOS style which is Dark Ambient. I never felt thrilled by ARCHAOS although their music seems to have gained respect in Romania and this is a joy for me. As far as DIVINE MUZAK is concerned, the facts seem to be the same, perhaps a little more knotty and not at all Gothic Rock since Noise-Industrial note has the most significant task in building the effects. The whole sound is elaborated and performed on computer while mixing the voices is just another torment Dan puts us through. I started to discover as well tribal-ethno echoes and the exotic wave mixed with cosmic shades and church choirs simply sends to my ear a shy mood of meditation. It doesn’t sound bad yet neither kicks one’s ass. It is possible to be too “soft” synthetic for my taste such sound but this is not a reason not to listen to “En-trance”. Deep inside such music there is one single step between quality and reject while the final result can only be disclosed by the very mood once created. You are welcome to skim through by yourselves the 13-th sequences and see where you can get: if you place yourselves back where you came from, then, I assume you just lost your time. If you find yourselves confused and lost somewhere in an intangible unknown, then it surely means DIVINE MUZAK “stroke” you.. www.mp3.com/divine.muzak. Rating: 0.75/1 (03.03)

DOMINION III (AUT)-“Life Has Ended Here” CD’02 (43. 41 min, 7 tracks) (NAPALM)

This is another surprise, even if half disclosed, coming from the person behind Tharen’s designation. In other words, it is about the one who keeps

alive projects like DARGGARD or AMESTIGON. Right after “The Hand and The Sword” debut, in 2000, Tharen conceives another seven sequences besides Elisabeth Toriser and Jorg Lanz. The material is a sample of avant-garde dark Wave or to be more precise-depressing melancholic and full of melodiousness Industrial Electronic. Tharen’s demonic voice is surrendered by Elisabeth’ innocent affectionate one, the keyboard creates a fairy mood, but in the same time there is a sombre atmosphere as well... Jorg’s guitar introduces an extreme Metal well controlled by the electronic battery’s tunes... and I don’t know for sure why... but the album simply made me feel alive again! This is no better than the debut, I’d say it is even more inaccessible but, following a similar direction as on the former one, Tharen actually succeeds entering a new sound identity for DOMINION III -probably as indented- and here are some of Austrian Black Metal, some of Viennese Dark Wave (DARGGARD, DVKE, GRABESMOND). If you got pleasure from the first album, I suppose it is practically impossible not to be surprised by this new opus as there are: rhythm, melody, discharging energy, some resemblances with DEPECHE MODE especially when the male voice turns into a clear low imposing one (“Conductors Of Life”)... everything is fresh new modern and surrounded by a mystical darken aura! www.bleedingpool.com/dominion3 Rating: 0.90/1 (28.08)

DRILLER KILLER (SWE)-“Cold, Cheap and Disconnected” CD’02 (41. 19 min, 11 tracks) (OSMOSE)

Holy Moses... what a mess!!! Core, Punk, Metal, Hard Core... violence, brutality, fastness...nothing to move me for this period of my life! I suppose this is an experiment started many years ago and this is an album of highest anger in the band’s history! I am sure that, during live performances, the aggressive voice along with the amazing guitar can incite the public to shake hair, destroy everything and jump in the mass...really I can picture this. But I find at least difficult to comment such sound yet if you ever come near DRILLER KILLER’ gig... just make sure you have a safe place to stay away from fans’ madness, otherwise the BIOHAZARD entertaining rhythms and voice like... might transmit Metallic vibrations all surrounding you and, all of a sudden, unexpectedly fast, your presence could fade away... I guess it is appreciable the explosion of such energy discharged by DRILLER KILLER’s tunes!!! http://listen.to/driller_killer Rating: 0.77/1 (18.08)

ECLIPSE (POL)-“The Act Of Degradation” CD’02 (55. 39 min, 13 tracks) (BLACKEND)

Chors and Daamr perform a computerized Death Metal extremely violent and complex since “Dorsacharms Venomous Colours” is a very well quoted one for the last three years. In the meanwhile, there were some attempts for changes in line-up, yet finally the two musicians remained in the same formula to record these new tracks. The explosive Black Metal is much more technical, more intricate while many parts can even be compared with EMPEROR and the atmosphere as well awards a fantastic energy so that the entire album seems

attentively and with dexterity conceived. Sincerely I enjoyed a lot this new chapter of ECLIPSE and I believe it would be quite a loss if they stopped here. Although there is nothing innovative, ECLIPSE proves being capable of playing Black Metal in a very professional line of attack and this has nothing to do with the fact of choosing for a computerized one while programming substitutes an entire line-up... as we still live in a whole new millennium! Rating: 0.77/1 (11.02)

ELEMAN(AUT)-“Common Sky” CD’02 (52. 29 min, 11 tracks) (WAB)

Electro or Rock... Pretty hard to label such...In fact, the four Austrians has chosen a less interesting path, at least for me...the guitars’ aggressiveness interchange with the voice’s explosiveness and the staccato rhythms send me to Power or even Hip-Hop. Maybe it is a MACHINE HEAD more electronic and this should be a more appropriate description. But what does it matter as long as this kind of music doesn’t ring a bell for me?! Noise, animation, plenty of energy... just typical issues for extrovertive Rockers!!! Rating: 0.68/1 (17.07)

ELYSIUM (AUS)-“Dreamscapes” CD’01 (53. 22 min, 7 tracks) (DE PROFUNDIS)

Rumors came to me regarding Judy Chiara’s presence on this album and that was why I longed for listening to this debut! This album is not bad at all, although the old MY DYING BRIDE style does not interest anymore. The seven Epic Doom Death Metal tracks reveal an atmospheric slow sound with contrasting voices, abundant keyboard and Doom guitars. Here and there, Judy’s voice makes its appearance but unfortunately dominated by Jamie Marsh’s one, which is in Aaron type and so characteristic to Depressive Death Doom Metal. The tracks are pretty long and because of that the audition becomes even more enjoyable, yet I must say ELYSIUM brings nothing new. Both concept and interpretation of these sequences are great though the only ones who might get interested in this album are those who still listen to earlier ANATHEMA, MY DYING BRIDE or UNHOLY. Rating: 0.78/1 (24.02)

EMPEROR (NOR)-“Prometheus: The Discipline Of Fire & Demise” CD’01 (51. 44 min, 9 tracks) (CANDLELIGHT)

It all started promising... “The Eruption”’s first tunes have already created a mystical marvellous atmosphere for the listener until, behind a guitar’s accelerating rhythm or rather extremely fast one, I found knotty passages even classical or jazz in PECCATUM manner as only Ihsahn keyboards and programming could possibly offer. I deeply hoped it wouldn’t last more than a few fragments in this direction but, unfortunately for me, the entire album has been built in such note and waste. In other words, if desire for listening PECCATUM in a brutal version with aggressive voices and elaborated rhythms, definitely the last EMPEROR album is the perfect choice. It cannot be said the album sounds bad (it is still EMPEROR!) but I am not that person to play EMPEROR just to listen in exchange PECCATUM, it isn’t fair! This is the Norwegian trio’s last album, perhaps the most complex miscellaneous and less atmospheric

one, not all linear yet inaccessible, I think, for all who want pure Black Metal! Perhaps EMPEROR has attained the boundaries where Black Metal ends and another style is born... I might be myself limited and EMPEROR simply intends to open one’s eye towards new horizons... I am confused and have no clue... The most important thing is to accept this challenge (which I did not so far) of Ihsahn, Samoth and Trym to assimilate the effects and let yourselves carried by the sound while mentally and candidly gazing into present. The future does not exist whereas the past is nostalgia, initiation and old faded times! EMPEROR is a Black Metal legend since “In The Nightside Eclipse” still remains the most inspired and the best Nordic Black Metal album I ever listened to in last 10 years! There is nothing to indicate the other Norwegian’s albums as negligible but it’s obvious the force “In The Nightside Eclipse” still diffuse around and shadows each further release including this very last. If we assume an equation which common factor is EMPEROR then the unidentified would definitely feature itself into one single word: respect! Thank you EMPEROR for a decade of existence! R.I.P.! www.emperorhorde.com. Rating: 0.78/1 (2001)

ENDSTILLE(GER)-“Operation Wintersturm” CD’02 (36. 24 min, 9 tracks) (WW2)

Mamma mia.... there is a third World War going on and I hadn’t any idea of.....!! This is a supper-aggressive Black Metal in old MARDUK manner! No chance to escape, none to breath any further! The entire album is based on fastness and violence, full of Heavy/Speed Metal riffs, a horrifying battery and a shy, almost mute, bass because of such holocaust already created by the instruments! I wouldn’t say I disliked the album, for one time audition but neither could I have appreciated more than the Germans’ rage in performing those 9 tracks. I believe that all interested in tough experiences could find delight in “Operation Wintersturm”... as it is just another sample of aggressiveness extended beyond any limit of reality! www.endstille.com Rating: 0.78/1 (23.10)

ENID (GER)-“Seelenspiegel” CD’02 (45. 41 min, 9 tracks) (CODE666)

After you found out almost everything that was hidden behind ENID’s story (see the interview inside last “Kogaionon”’s issue), now it is time for you to be aware of what Martin and Florian has recently arranged. Well, everything is a fairy tale, fiction, purely fantasy! The clear voice, followed by a synth that imitates almost each every instrument, bestows the album with the status of quite a piece of collection for all who are interested in quality music. I believe it is essential for they had succeeded to definitely detach from SUMMONING influence so that the new sound has finally its own personality and identity. Moreover, the guitars are to be heard more clearly (and they are real!!!) and ENID can at last be numbered as a Metal band even if with avant-garde tints. The new tracks are more complex, more Black Metal with extremely aggressive voices pursuing Martin’s baritone one and classical choirs, all featuring epic or medieval elements. I cannot say that the guitar players are capable of

presenting a brilliant interpretation in comparison with the magnificent keyboard, but the important thing is that ENID, this time, proves more than a synthetic sound created and performed only by a multi-instrument. As strong points I can enumerate the voices’ contrasts, the choirs, and the epic-baroque atmosphere and not at last the skills of Moritz Neuner drummer that accompany the entire sound. We can also enjoy a splendid Digipack and I feel to say that the whole lay-out is of a high class. The single disadvantage consists in a rather too pronounced opposition of aggressiveness and fancy atmosphere but, once again, I might be wrong. They define themselves as Metallic Fantasy Art! www.enid.ht.st. Rating: 0.79/1 (21.02)

ENTHRONED(BEL)-“Carnage in Worlds Beyond” CD’02 (39. 30 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)

The fifth album of famous Belgian Black musicians finally has been released! After series of changes in line-up, from the beginning until right now, (the last one meant replacement of Namroth Blackthorn with Alsvið/SETH), ENTHRONED gathered force to bring up this new material as furious and fast as all the others. In fact, I’d say that the band never abdicated from aggressive Black Metal line in lack of Gothic or melodic parts. The 10 tracks discharge a fantastic energy, the guitars’ fastness is remarkable and so is the criminal battery! The voice is demonic brutal full of hate... I don’t know what to say... but everything is aggressive, too violent just like on the first IMMORTAL albums... As a great disadvantage I notice tracks’ linearity as, at a certain point, there is no chance to distinguish one from another. I am sure that such sound cannot make a difference unless in a live version when besides some pyrotechnical effects the listener might experience the feeling of hell on earth! An irreproachable execution, modest inspiration, classic Black Metal traditional elements...fulminating fastness... and these should be all specific details regarding ENTHRONED new sound! www.enthroned.de Rating: 0.81/1 (17.08)

ENTWINE(FIN)-“Time Of Despair” CD’02 (51. 04 min, 11 tracks) (SPIKEFARM)

Upon these Finnish musicians’ musical path you can actually analyse in which way Gothic Metal evolves or decay. I have listened several times to this album and found not demerits despite of copious commercial which can be noted from the very first track. ENTWINE illustrates a new album, the third, in a melodic manner which obliterates the underground scene but preserving quite strong benefits for MTV or other similar popular channels. It is, if you like, another kind of THE GATHERING with a male voice featuring the “Mandyliion” period or perhaps the newer HIM full of Rock and Pop structures. All is rhythmic and pleases, all is danceable... too shiny and romantic for my tastes. The plentiful keyboard interacts with a clear baritone voice, guitars situate somewhere at the borders of Metal and Rock while the battery is rather boring with dancing rhythms. So, it is a simplistic sound at the commercial discretion, full of vacation atmosphere and a “metallic” recreation. Rating: 0.79/1 (01.07)

ENS COGITANS(RUS)-“Disangelium” CD’02 (44. 01 min, 6 tracks) (IROND)

I remember I said the former material was a perfect mixture of Romantic Gothic Techno Metal. Up to this one, I confess that such diversity completely confuses me. Male vocals might be attractive but only when not screamed, guitars come to reach epic echoes but fast darkened by Power Progressive riffs tending to Alternative. It is obvious that the five know to play since both the execution and mixing are of first class. But this is not enough for the album to be praised. I figured not what kind of music ENS COGITANS performs because I am lost inside this common mixture of Electro/Techno with Gothic Atmospheric. It is just another band that knows not what exactly plays but since the music is engaged...I do agree with such excellent manner! Personally... I prefer the former album as it seemed more elaborated arranged and structured. www.enscogitans.ru Rating: 0.78/1 (08.11)

ENSOPH (ITA)-“Bleeding Womb Of Ananke-il sangue e l’inchostro di Fredegisio” CD’01 (63. 59 min, 10 tracks) (BEYOND)

Finally, these Italians’ true value is reckoned! If you can recall, when I wrote about the tape/MCD “Les Confessions du Mat”, I had only praising words as the music was extremely sad and nostalgic. In the meanwhile, some line-up changes occurred and their new promo tape, “Ananke: the spiral-Trinity beyond Alpha&Omega”, determined Beyond Productions to make them a good offer. The new direction is rather Electro/Industrial, with plenty Ethno tints in a pronounced Dark Gothic Ambient background. The flute replaces the female voice while the screamed male voice interweaves the clear one. Well, it is a fantastic atmosphere and the whole album tends to reach an Experimental avant-garde, diverse and complex sound. At the CD’s finish we can also enjoy two tracks from the promo tape-2000 and it is obvious that the style differences are major. I would have been happy if at least one track from the MCD-1998 featured the CD so that, all in all it might have been considered an ENSOPH Saga. As a modest conclusion, I feel to say that the album presents a certain type of music resuming a large scale of trends, more or less Metallic yet enough serious to provoke a meditative mood as far as the future is concerned. www.Ensoph.8m.com. Rating: 0.84/1 (24.02)

EPHEL DUATH (ITA)-“Rephormula” CD’02 (73. 20 min, 13 tracks) (ELITIST/EARACHE)

It is not a new album as many of us believed! It is just a re-edition of “Phormula” album including now two remixes (“Embossed” & “Instinkt”) and legendary tracks of their demo “Opera”. Since this very material features not new tracks, I shall only review what I haven’t listened to so far, meaning the two remixes: a Techno, Industrial sounds in MORTIIS sort yet too soft and rather boring. This CD must have importance only for those who were pleasantly surprised by the computerized Symphonic Black Metal these two composed so far (in the meantime there is only one musician left) because the sound is much clearer and the booklet more professional.

That should be all. Rating: 0.69/1 (23.02)

ERBEN DER SCHOPFUNG (LICH)-
"Twilight" CD'01 (50.42 min, 9 tracks)
(MOS)

This is another Oliver Falk's Gothic Metal project, but this time in an Electro version, more commercial and less introspective. This very debut features nine entertaining sequences with a fragile (less experienced) female voice, compositions based on Oliver's synth and also a few echoes of guitars and drums. It is a project ready to gain appreciation from Gothic and EBM fans meaning the other side of depressiveness and sadness. In comparison with WELTENBRAND, EDS is Metal with much more rhythm and atmosphere, without contrasting concepts to be developed in mystical or fancy tales inside its lyrics since the nearby direction is a real quotidian natural one. In other words, we can enjoy Rock traces, industrial reverberation, romantic passages ("Alone"), Gothic synth and a Pop voice. The sound is profound solely in the presence of baritone male voices while the ATROCITY guys are special invited guests for a few scores. EDS seems to be a more fresh idea than WELTENBRAND and, although it sounds closer to the hearts of those who prefer simplistic messages, definitely makes a good impression with this very debut. Let's see what future can bring! There is one more single detail: a noteworthy cover and an excellent artwork! www.erben.li. Rating: 0.78/1 (09.02)

ETERNAL TEARS OF SORROW
(FIN)-"A Virgin And A Whore" CD'01
(43.09 min, 9 tracks)
(SPINEFARM)

Appetizing name for an album... while Niklas Sundin's booklet design reminds me of "La Masquerade Infernal"-one of the best albums ever existed! The five Finn's music carries on the line of the antecedent album, "Chaotic Beauty", which means melodiousness, intense keyboard, Black voices and progressive passages. I am not quite mad about such sound since the commercial line is more than straight visible and the rhythm just kills the Dark message of the album. Otherwise, I guess it is an excellent Melodic Black Gothic Metal album yet performed with less inspiration than what we could have listened two years ago. www.eternaltears.net. Rating: 0.73/1 (10.03)

EVEN SONG (HUN)-"Mysterium"
CD'01 (35.28 min, 6 tracks)
(DISPLEASED)

I hate to listen to short albums because I believe it is rather hard to expose and express musical concepts in a relatively brief hasty score. EVENSONG might number itself as an exception because the Hungarians' third album sounds remarkable, by far the best in their entire history. Melodic perfectly embraces Doom, symphonic tunes harmoniously interface with the classical ones, the atmospheric keyboard and the female voice charmingly get in touch with the male one, guitars' riffs are progressive, slightly knotty, so are the drums... everything sound now more technical and mature. A strong point is the fact that all six tracks sound completely different one from each other, yet, after a repeated audition, the album sounds... unfinished and turns into an obsessive theme. I would have died to

listen to, at least, a few more tracks! Anyway, for a four years old band, the level they reached in interpretation is by far superior many other Doom ones, which try to consolidate their place on the actual scene. Mihaly Szabo, Szolo u.97/1, H-5600 Bekescsaba, Hungary, www.negativeart.hu/evensong. Rating: 0.78/1 (2001)

EVEREVE (GER)-"E-Mania" CD'01
(51.44 min, 12 tracks)
(MASSACRE/ROCRIS DISC)

The German quintet has lived and spent quite beautiful years under Nuclear Blast roof (three albums) and, now, Massacre has the mission to behave, at least, as careful as the predecessors. They have strong reasons as well, since the Cyber Gothic Metal EVEREVE approached is a very expressive one, with a fragile yet also powerful voice, heavy guitars, electro passages, oriental keyboards ("Demons"), female voice in contrast with the psycho male one ("Ligeia"), pop tunes ("Fade to Grey"), theatric choirs ("KM")... all in darkness, strength, coldness, cyber. I should also mention about the change in line-up, unlike the former albums since it seems to have finally become a strong point of the Germans. SISTER OF MERCY fans shall definitely be glad and enchanted by these new frames and especially because of the imposing voice of MZ Eve 51. www.evereve.net. Rating: 0.73/1 (2001)

EVIL BARDS (ITA)-"Prelude To Sadness" CD'01 (40.04 min, 9 tracks)

Generally speaking Italian bands are tempted by avant-garde trend and therefore try to combine various musical influences. In EVIL BARDS case, the Melodic death Metal line is completed with Dark, Doom and Gothic tints besides folk and acoustic parts. In other words, on a melodic Death/Black structure, the screamed voice, otherwise modest and annoying, is a little isolated from the rest of the instruments, which might result from an underprivileged mixing. The strong point consists in instrumentation, an atmospheric sound created by Keyboard, piano and violin so that a baroque maybe medieval dimension is outlined-together with classical hues just in order to harmoniously and intelligently embrace an extreme metallic aura. I assume it is a good start after two promo tapes and I believe you should keep in mind this appearance. evilbards@hotmail.com. Rating: 0.75/1 (10.03)

FALL OF THE LEAF (FIN)-
"Fermina" CD'02 (51.35 min, 9 tracks)
(ICARUS)

What did really happen with this band? The first two albums were great while their featured melodious Black Metal was at least, by far, extremely entertaining and pleasant... The new direction is away much too distanced from what I prefer since FOTL approached an Atmospheric Rock with deep roots in Metal yet on a commercial Wave Gothic background. The voice became clear, a normal one and though pleasant, keyboard completes the atmosphere, guitars desperately try to impose a personal point and the drum is more than modest... I feel sorry for this band as in Black Metal they seemed to provide more strength! Perhaps "Fermina" should be regarded and understood from another different point of view but surely not a metallic one. But this is not my business any more. Farewell,

Tuomas, and good luck on your new path! Rating: 0.72/1 (09.03)

FANGORN (GER)-"Fangorn" CD'02
(61.47 min, 11 tracks)
(G.U.C.)

This is the first time I listen to the sextet although it was founded eight years ago! I understood they released so far two albums, "Non-Rhapsodian" and "Pentatonische Furien", both in the same Melodic Death Metal manner. What I now listen to is a relatively successful combination of Heavy, Gothic and Death Metal with some Black Metal influences, extremely agile guitars and different voices from the screamed demonic ones to clear baritone or female ones. In spite of the stylistic diversity, the music is often annoying since passing from Thrash and Death tunes to something else is not quite in accordance with the rest of the atmosphere created by rhythmic and melodic parts. Otherwise, it is just a characteristic album for the actual extreme Metal scene of the German underground, dedicated to those who know or speak this language. www.fangorn-zone.de Rating: 0.77/1 (03.04)

FLOODLAND(AUT)-"Ocean Of The Lost" CD'02 (68.30 min, 15tracks)
(WAB)

Interesting project... SISTERS OF MERCY and FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM but in a more Dark version, with a lower voice well delimited from the rest of the sound and typical guitars tunes for Gothic. Although it is the first album I am listening to (there are so far "Chapter One"-demo, "Seasons"-maxi CD and "The Now And Here Is Never"-debut), FLOODLAND captivated my attention right away even if what they perform brings nothing new to Gothic Rock scene. Maybe it is something new for the Austrian scene and this is, I believe, a step forward. The album's atmosphere is a stupendous one, keyboard gives life to an attractive background, the battery awards a listenable rhythm while the sober voice shapes the very specific characteristic of these four Austrians' music. The fact is that indeed this is a very interesting album which distinguishes from other Gothic Rock bands' mass but it simply didn't find its own identity. Perhaps, the next album, "Decay", which is supposed to be released soon... shall bring such on the Austrian scene. Who knows? Anyway, it is worth to try this sample of Dark Rock as you definitely shall not be sorry! There is a lot of time to listen to it... almost 70 minutes! www.floodland.org Rating: 0.84/1 (17.07)

FLOODLAND(AUT)-"Decay" CD'02
(48.44 min, 10 tracks)
(WAB)

Yeah, I finally listened to the new album of this band; I surely waited for some time! I am not sure if the four musicians came to outline the stylistic identity, but I guarantee that, as far as interpretation is concerned, everything surpasses the previous album. Moreover, the Dark note is better delineated while the Gloom atmosphere seems to be the guiding light following the bass rhythm onto a more serious and grave sound dimension. Clear vocals are remarkable, the low tonality is an attraction and, in the same time, a key element of the sound. Whether is Gothic, Rock, Dark or Pop... it doesn't matter and I don't know, to be frank,

but I do know for FLOODLAND not following the trend as their music has deep roots in various styles more or less Metallic, but definitely governed by a sad mature frozen aura. "Coincidence" is my favourite track; the mixture of instruments and programming sounds besides a lent and bleak rhythm discharges a ravishing echo inside me. If I tried to be more precise I would say that more likely the FLOODLAND sound places somewhere at confluence of TYPE O NEGATIVE with SISTERS OF MERCY, FIELDS OF NEPHILIM and DAVID BOWIE. Maybe THE CURE as well? Out of the ordinary, by all means! Rating: 0.85/1 (29.10)

FOREFATHER(ENG)-"Engla Tocyme"
CD'02 (40.17 min, 7 tracks)
(ANGELISC)

Anglo-Saxon direction in metallic version can be distinguish fro the very beginning as FOREFATHER is recognized such as Metal band whose deep roots are grown from Britannic mythology and history. For those who never heard of this band I must tell that this very album is the third after "Deep Into Time", 1999 (now reprinted) and "The Fighting Man", 2000. There is also a limited edition of "Legends Untold"-CD but this is all about. I need to outline that the mixture of Epic with Heavy and Black Metal is the most successful one from all their materials although it seems to be vigour less album. It is more like a BATHORY or HADES with a clear warlike voice but very comestible and full of melodiousness. It creates an atmosphere of comfort with free and easy rhythms and prolonged riffs (all made by keyboard) pointing out these two musicians' artistry. It was a real pleasure to listen to this new album of FOREFATHER although after a continuous audition... tracks tend to liquefy. Wulfstan's gentle timbre of voice followed by Athelstan's keyboard simply transposes me into a different charming and simple world... yet a remarkable one because of concepts like honour and oblation... Which is almost 3-4 centuries ago. http://Members.aol.com/AngeliscE. Rating: 0.82/1 (13.06)

FORLORN(NOR)-"Hybernation"
CD'03 (53.21 min, 9 tracks)
(NAPALM)

Alvarin was about to give up this musical project because, right after "Ad Caelestis Res" was released, he suddenly realized he was left by his own. Obviously, after many hesitations and quests, Hennex (the new nickname for stage) found and contacted Vulpes, Dolgar, Winter and Lonafell so that the new material actually came to be recorded. I have no idea why they struggled so hard to release these new tracks since there is nothing remarkable of what they do and neither has the touch of originality. It is about just a quality execution, melodic parts, brutal vocals (in old GEHENNA manner), modern synth, guitar knotty intercessions and an ingenious battery... a kind of atmospheric Norwegian Black Metal with a great technique. Briefly, this is a decent album, well interpreted but in lack of inventiveness, pleasing for the ear but no more than 2-3 times. For those who still hadn't enough of Black Metal clones or simply want to listen to the same music under different titles, "Hybernation" might be quite a choice! I find it pathetic; it could be modicum for the curious ones and great for the fans! www.forlorn.no Rating: 0.78/1

GOD(ROM)-"Aura" CD'02 (38. 10 min, 7 tracks)

Well, well... a long time passed since this band kicked us with new music!!! I see that many years are needed for a Romanian band to come with a new material on the market! But I guess all these details you actually already found out throughout the interview. Let's pass to the music! This CD does not represent a final version, as I know that GOD has just returned to the studio and the mastering is planned to end in November. But this doesn't mean I cannot tell you about the new sound. In fact, some of the tracks I had the opportunity to listen to live...but the album is more atmospheric and the keyboard seems to be omnipresent, guitars interchange Heavy effects with melodic ones, the battery follows fluctuating unpredictable rhythms with a "live" effect, the violin can be heard clearer while the female voice finally reached a harmony with the male one. If I were in the position to perceive the album in comparison with the former ones, I'd say GOD suffers at inspiration chapter. The seven tracks preserve the same Gothic/Doom/Death Metal area, which was pretty used last decade, besides Black passages and traditional tunes with a Folkloric inspiration. Perhaps "Shining" could be a track not in the patterns as the Electro rhythms embrace fast a THEATRE OF TRAGEDY sound reaching a status of danceable and digestible for any listener. Castor's violent voice keeps on "hurting" my ears while the passages of him playing clear or reciting are unfortunately pretty rare. Latin, English and Romanian are featured in their lyrics and thus I could say the album develops a complex concept even if I hardly made an idea about it! I don't know if the new tracks catch the public as the previous albums did but I am sure there is a hunger for autochthon albums in the last years and therefore GOD might have a huge impact. I've never been a GOD fan but I must confess I pleasingly listened to a very well-executed and intelligently conceived long track, "Calatorul" (Peregrine)!!! It is the only one in Romanian language and Moldavian folkloric potencies are well outlined; there is certain compatibility between Metal and mourning autochthon songs sustained by a bombastic keyboard and all in all, in the end, those confer colour and feeling to the whole sound! For the rest... it is just the same GOD sound with diverse getting through and influences coming from all over the Metallic spectrum. As a synthesis, "Aura" seems to be a more powerful aggressive album dominated by a well-known and super promoted Metal but definitely in lack of brilliance! Perhaps if this were the debut album... GOD would have reached a smacking success! But we shall see if so... in a few months. If you desire for this band not to die... well, make sure this album shall be included in your personal collection as the release date is before the end of the year!!! www.geocities.com/godisro Rating: 0.82/1 (07.10)

GOETIA(POL)-"Hail Satan" CD'02 (32. 50 min, 6 tracks) (ISO666)

Fast and Brutal Black Metal again...! Oh, such hatred and abhorrence on this earth...! I am curious how many of these bands shall exist as well during the next five years. All are Evil and pissed off because of living... Anyway,

this is their business... GOETIA is an added band to last decade wave but despite many of those nullities, here we can enjoy an aggressive line well and decently interpreted, with synchronization and energising rhythms. And this can be noticed as well due to their declared direction to Death Metal. The 6 tracks are pleasing for an audition but only if you are gifted with great patience and a natural curiosity to completely listen to this album. "Mare Tenebrarum" was this band debut released last year at Mordgrimm Records and this new chapter seems to be a continuance of it. I have no idea what kind of continuance... or to what... perhaps to the eternal boring Black/Death Metal hundreds of bands seem to perform these days. But nevertheless this is the best material The Greek label ever released. www.goetia.metal.pl Rating: 0.75/1 (01.10)

GORELORD(NOR)-"Zombie Suicide Part: 666" CD'02 (39. 01 min, 11 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

Gore Metal? Sinister stylistic designation! Well, there was no other possible way if we take in account that

the project is conceived by Frediablo (NECROPHAGIA, WURDULAK, SOUL FORSAKEN and GRIMFIST)! Sick mind, brutal lyrics, prohibited to appear in the booklet of the CD, a horror atmosphere, menacing guitars, cadaveric voices, dreadful bass, incendiary battery... everything sounds morbid, violent and without hope! This is a sample of authentic Groove Death Metal but in an explosive shape in lack of any modern interlude or polite atmosphere. Uhhh!!! Indeed, Frediablo is a talented instrumentalist and this cannot be denied but you need nerves of steel and a huge desire for musical brutality in order to listen to GORELORD. I understood this is the second album as the first ("Force Fed On Human Flesh") was produced by Killjoy (NECROPHAGIA) and had as guests Jehmod (PERIHED, BLOODTHORN) and Maniac (MAYHEM). As news: the third album, "Norwegian Chainsaw Massacre" is almost ready... including on CD a video-clip as well. One thing is for sure... The gates of Hell have been opened, & there is a new name for Gore & Horror... its name is GORELORD! www.horrorseek.com/horror/gorelord.

Rating: 0.79/1 (22.10)

GORGUTS (USA)-"From Wisdom to Hate" CD'01 (40. 36 min, 8 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

Luc Lemay is one of the most representative exponents of all times Death Metal while his activity, besides GORGUTS, transformed the band into a vivid legend. After a peace and relax time, due to Roadrunner label's financial problems, the troops come back with verve releasing "Obscura" and, now, these new sequences, which personalize one of the best Death Metal albums of this year. What can I tell you more about GORGUTS in 2001 version! Just that everything is like in good all times and, as a paradox, that is excellent: devastating guitars, throaty furious voice, fast tunes virtuosity and master craft. What should be wrong?! The fact there is no fundamental change in the actual sound, even if it is long time since their glory period. Anyway, as a final remark, this album might get welcome by those who still listen to OBITUARY or DEATH. Rating: 0.75/1 (2001)

GRIFFAR(FRA)-"Of Witches And Celts" CD'02 (48. 35 min, 4 tracks) (ISO666)

I have heard a lot of things about this band, but only now I actually managed to listen to the debut album. This duet presents in a primitive manner (as sound and as approach as well) underground Black Metal. Griffar and Drakhian prove they can handle their instruments and can play music but what for? This Cold Majestic Pagan Black Metal as declared has nothing out of the ordinary, nothing to delimit from the Evil bands' crowd. Make-up, madness, screams, clownish rhythms and linear ones, fast tunes, some atmospheric riffs... and keep on going! The tracks are more than long and maybe this is the only distinct element I respect. In other words, the effort and seriousness are two chapters really appreciable and so is the execution part. Lyrics are some kind of stories from Celtic legends, pretty enjoyable and apt to transpose you into a mood quite inappropriate with the sound. Well, it is still insufficient for me. Anyway, the two of them are connected with other projects they actually featured in: PROFANE, BLACK DEMENTIA or TAAKE. A material exclusively dedicated to mad Black Metal or in another terms True Black Metal. www.info-black.com Rating: 0.76/1 (30.09)

GRREN CARNATION (NOR)-"Light Of The Day, Day Of Darkness" CD'01 (60. 05 min, 1 track) (PROPHECY/THE END)

If I had listened to the last CARPATHIAN FOREST album, I would probably have been able to draw exactly the profile of Tchorst musician since he is, for a long time, an important character of European Metal scene. You maybe already know that IN THE WOODS... firstly carried GREEN CARNATION title and was founded by Tchorst almost ten years ago, when Death Metal was quite en vogue. His collaboration with bands such as EMPEROR, SATYRICON, EINHERJER finally lead to the abandon of his first project and that was a benefic fact for everybody since Botteri Brothers have realized a few genial IN THE WOODS... albums! In 1998, Tchorst decided to resume the activity with GC and, after two years, he released his first album featuring an

exceptional line-up yet, even so, I was not at all enchanted by this product. There were too long riffs, a psychedelic atmosphere in a Doom Metal and Pink Floyd influences and these aspects made it too knotty and charged for my actual taste. This new album can be considered exclusively Tchort's own solo creation and I must say this masterpiece fascinated me from the first instant I laid my hands on the CD. Its design is at least very attractive, the autumn rusty shades surrounds in a perfect harmony other images that immortalize the Mother Nature. After an outstanding intro, a few guitars' tunes and voices of children slowly make their appearance and then, Jan Transit (IN THE WOODS...), begins to sing mournfully: "A vision, a call, In times before my fall, In life before I became, I dreamed I was insane..." The manner he performs is deeply melancholic and the instruments mark their presence firstly in a discreet way so that at a certain time they explode in progression. If I had to describe what it is to be heard here I would be forced to fill dozens of pages and still I think I could not stop. It is important for you to understand that, all in all, it is a close-knit track although very complex. I would rather say it is still much more accessible and melodious than Tchort's former compositions, as the parts are much more various, from Pink Floyd to Doom Metal and even shades of Rock, Gothic or Metal. I find it hard to express in such few words what dozens of people perform during one single track for one whole hour. The imposing choirs imprint a remarkable sobriety while Synne Diana's voice (IN THE WOODS...) makes the gray psychedelic even deeper. Even the sound of carousel (merry-go-round) that we hear at the end takes our thoughts towards alien unfamiliar realms. I must confess that the album's finish has the mesmerizing power of throwing you out into a deeper and deeper oppressive nostalgia. It is a true exhibition of inspiration and originality and finally a precise testament of Tchort. Genial! www.green-carnation.de. Rating: 0.93/1 (07.02)

HADES ALMIGHTY (NOR)-"The Pulse Of Decay" CD'01 (33.06 min, 7 tracks) (PSYCHO BITCH)
This band is one of my favourite and, in my opinion, their debut "...Again Shall Be" most certainly is the most representative one for Nordic Black metal scene. HADES style (the former name) bears a resemblance to BATHORY... but the aggressiveness of voices and guitars has here a melancholic shape while the entire rhythm is rather slow yet on the extremely fast background created by the drums! in order to get a clear idea of how the new album sounds I need comparing with the first ones: HADES ALMIGHTY has no longer the strength they once had but what we can listen now overpass by far "Millennium Nocturne" state. So we might even appreciate it as a very good album. HADES ALMIGHTY and then AETERNUS started on the same line but the last one had become much more famous, probably also because of great luck. For me, "...again shall be..." definitely remains a masterpiece and the last material could only reach the consideration of being a successful echo of those past days! www.hadesalmighty.com. Rating: 0.86/1 (24.02)

HAGALAZ' RUNEDANCE(NOR)-"Frigga's Web" CD'02 (37.59 min, 10 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)
Past & present & legend & myth & fiction & history & dream = Andrea Nebel Haugen. Everybody knows that Samoth's wife (ex-EMPEROR) is one of the most dedicated disciples of Pagan current and an eloquent explorer of Nordic-European spirituality and her book "The Ancient Fires of Midgard" is just an expressive example. Andrea has reached the third album of this project, after her outstanding debut, "The Winds That Sang of Midgard's Fate" and the thriving "Volven". The new material is not so different from the former ones and it actually is a new journey in time inside mysterious universe Andrea studied and the result is just a peaceful music. I might say it is a fusion of Folk and traditional elements, besides synth and all the rest of instruments used by well recognized artists in this sphere and I refer to bands such as FABELSVANSENE, HURDY GURDY or CORONA BOREALIS as they pled for the same musical orientation. It is not a better or worse album, although now, the multitude of instruments quite immediately strike...perhaps it is just a continuance of "Volven" following the same strategy: Andrea's mesmerizing voice is pointed out and the ritualistic synth and drums plainly fulfil the atmosphere of such characteristic sound. The booklet lay-out is elegant and Andrea's messages included inside those pages can be a very important one for anyone who desire mystical initiation. There is one single detail to be mentioned: the album contains as well "The Home That I Will Never See", a track initially featured on the debut album. Rating: 0.80/1 (17.07)

HATE ETERNAL(USA)-"King Of All Kings" CD'02 (33.48 min, 10 tracks) (EARACHE)
When you mention Erik Rutan, surely your mind pictures a diabolic view! How could else be since a MORBID ANGEL member actually introduces us a super elaborated Death Metal? This project's debut, in 1999, was "Conquering The Throne", a material that attentively featured HATE ETERNAL next to sacred names like MALEVOLENT CREATION, RIPPING CORPSE, MORBID ANGEL or NILE. These bands are actually in touch with HATE ETERNAL's line-up through Jared Anderson and Derek Roddy. I don't believe I have listened for this year an album of such professionalism energy or fastness! It probably is the best Death Metal album of the year and those who still listen to this style should definitely and immediately buy this half hour of extreme music! www.hateeternal.com Rating: 0.81/1 (23.08)

HIDDEN(?)-"Spectral Magnitude" CD'02 (54.24 min, 9 tracks) (RED STREAM)
Dismal Astral Death Metal...is their declared style and the band's origin is not made public, the underground depressive and weird sound is the ruler here... and these are just a few characteristic elements of this debut. In my language, HIDDEN follows a mixture of Doom, Black, Death and Speed Metal while the macabre voice and the sound of the guitars simply remind me of mystical bands of 90's. The atmosphere might carry your thoughts to DISEMBOWELMENT or

WINTER and the instruments' grave note widen an enigmatic aura on a strange mysterious environment. Here and there can be heard clear normal voices, I might even say Heavy Metal ones, but per ensemble HIDDEN sound is just fucking weird: slow openings rotates with super-fast ones, the battery is modestly mixed while, in exchange, the guitars' expressiveness absolutely dictate upon your instincts. I haven't understood much of this album but I know for sure that captivated my attention and for the moment I actually am intrigued to read an interview with the guys. I understood this is even more difficult to achieve since RED STREAM carefully selects any mode of getting in touch or "revealing" HIDDEN details! Rating: 0.80/1 (03.07)

HIMINBJORG (FRA)-"Haunted Shores" CD'02 (37.38 min, 7 tracks) (RED STREAM)
This is a very prodigious band! There is no new year without a new album. Their Pagan Viking Metal style follows a more domestic note, for the time being, with Heavy Metal tones as well as from other fields such as Speed or Death Metal! The aggressive voices are interrupted from time to time by slow passive parts with clear voices and even with choirs while the guitars' riffs dominate the entire sound and the solos confer a progressive tint for the whole album in spite of a notable speed of the rhythms. I cannot compare it with the former ones since the new sequences assemble inside rather everything that it has been done well until this very instant. "Haunted Shores" is by far the most mature step of these musicians. The traditional Viking note is excellently presented on "Of Desire and Lust", which is a track that reminds me of old HELHEIM. "The Eternal" seems to be a frame of epic dimensions rather too tranquil for Pagan Metal since the easygoing tunes and prolonged guitars' solos, besides a clear powerful voice, purely denote a sad aspect of a delightful nostalgia inside the complete atmosphere. The next track, "Lonely", follows the same silent line while the end of the album is scored by the longest track, which is perhaps the most aggressive one (at least as far as the voice is concerned). Well, it is about "The Voices Of Revenge" which reminds me that HIMINBJORG is still a Black Metal band. Otherwise, there is a sound not confoundable appreciated and noted although the limits that designate the band are extreme Metal and acoustic Ambient. Rating: 0.80/1 (16.02)

HOLLENTON (AUT)-"With Vilest Of Worms To Dwell" CD'01 (45.07 min, 8 tracks) (NAPALM)
Martin Shirenc, well known from PUNGENT STENCH, has started this project or VUZEM, by the time Austrian Black Metal Syndicate was in great ascendance. After many delays and, then, the disappearance of his own label, Dark Matter Records, Martin begins composing new tracks so that, in 1999, the first album, "Domus Mundi", is released under HOLLENTON mark. The debut shocked the Metal scene so that many publications voted it as the album of the year. After two years, HOLLENTON caught up the line with a new masterpiece, a mixture of Black, Death, Heavy and Atmospheric Metal, extremely fine evolved conceived and arranged, pretty elegantly mixed and dressed up, with a bombastic sound while the choirs and

symphonic touches confer an original and fascinate as well aura. I had rough time when to border HOLLENTON music into a certain style since each track reflects absolutely a different direction so that the large scale provides the listener 10 hymns of the highest class. Superb! Mailbox 221, Landstrasser Hauptstrasse 99-101, A-1030 Vienna, Austria, www.hollenthon.com. Rating: 0.90/1 (2001)

HORRID (ITA)-"Reborn In Sin" CD'02 (46.45 min, 8 tracks) (DEADSUN)
This time the French label presents a classical Death Metal band, with Swedish school melodic influences and a throaty voice in American style belonging to DEATH, CANNIBAL CORPSE ages... Although the sound is OK, the interpretation is no more than linear and the manner they approached makes no difference from any other Death Metal band... so that HORRID features just a quality album and nothing more. An interesting aspect is the fact that the album was recorded in Sunlight Studio. On the other hand, I don't think I remember ever listening to a better Italian Death Metal band to sound so good... this could be an eventual surprise for this style fans. horrid@yahoo.it. Rating: 0.78/1 (03.04)

IMPIOUS(SWE)-"The Killer" CD'02 (40.56 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)
This is just another heavy piece of strong Death/Thrash Metal! The five Swedes do not belie the line of their first albums, "Evilized" and "Terror Succeds", striking again the Metal market with fresh explosive and in rage sequences in addition to virtuosity. Having lots of teachings of Swedish Death Metal School, IMPIOUS forgets not the American like passages... the final sound pleases the audition but it is pretty common for those who use to listen to brutalities for the last 15 years. One or two auditions are fine and welcome... but otherwise it is already routine, repetitive scenario...another Death Metal clone playing on the Death scene of today! www.impious.net Rating: 0.77/1 (28.10)

INDIAN FALL (ROM)-"Pathfinder" CD'01 (44.06 min, 9 tracks) (PROMUSIC)
A new surprise is coming from Romania! Last year I listened to and saw these Brasov people at the Buzau festival yet, by far, I could not imagine they are capable so well of conceiving and performing such tracks! I might be subjective and it finally could be in my account if listening to what I like. INDIAN FALL presents now their debut and I want you to be sure it is in deed worthy! I found out a track that attracted me from the first time and which proved that these young musicians are not limited at all, on contrary, their musical specter is exceedingly assorted and inspired. You should carefully listen to "The Same Deep Dark Age" in order to realize that Dark Metal can easily embrace different forms in spite of the fact they declared themselves disciples of Black Gothic Atmospheric. If I had to enter more details, I would say that INDIAN FALL sound is based on an avant-garde configuration, an appreciatively flourishing arrangement of dissimilar styles delineating in abundance the main characteristics of melodiousness, aggressiveness as well as of nostalgia and sadness. The guitars' solos are

fascinating (a very talented guy!), the keyboard is rather connected to a meditative dimension yet elegantly faces the aggressive Black passages...well, and the voice is mostly destructive, throaty and screaming as well even if during certain parts might become "hymnic", imposing, low-voiced or clear rather whispering like Castor's/GOD. The instrumental pretty simple and rather monotonous track "Late October" turn loose a definite romantic aura with melancholic reminiscences. "Still Raining In My Dreams" seems to be a successful sequence and thus I discover I prefer the elongated tracks (over six minutes each). It is noteworthy, although influenced by fashionable styles, the fact these Romanians could originally combine all these guiding marks putting forward a large scale of musical influences. "Dreams are Followed" appears to be the most characteristic track of their style and perhaps as well the most complex one, while on the rest of the tracks they simply experienced more or less Black and Gothic Metal. I almost forgot, inside "Breathing", Mircea's keyboard imitates a traditional instrument, Pandean pipe, in such manner that the passage arrives to an amazing musical note! I detect that I only pointed the good aspects while the negative ones I did not touch. Well, I find rather too brusque the transition from lento to aggressive openings since the contrast is not as harmonious as the five probably desired. I am pretty sure that a straight orientation towards Dark and Atmospheric might raise a more appropriate mood for the listener since Black seems to be just the band's caprice which they wanted to turn into an immediate advantage, pretty well yet less originally. In other words, Black Metal parts, although modern melodious and atmospheric bring nothing new and cannot be distinguished as well as the rest of the sound. I also should mention that "Things That I" first tunes introduce a soprano frame, which is a positive aspect that needs to be studied for future compositions. The booklet design follows the same perfect line as the album's and that is why I see no reason for you not to acquire in a hurry this debut. It really is worthy! www.indian-fall.go.ro. Rating: 0.86/1 (13.01)

INGER DE FIER(ROM)-"A Taste Of The Things To Come" demo CD'02 (09. 15 min, 6 tracks)

This is the first autochthon Electro-Industrial project I ever listened to and it doesn't sound bad at all! What is here is not complete and not mastered but it is enough to make an idea regarding the sound. Inger Alb (MAGICA) and Bat (INTERITUS DEI) presents a synthetic sound based on programming and explosive rhythmic riffs. The effects hidden on the background tend to become one with Metal tunes and the Electro note seems to fit well. The Industrial shadows are rather too pale and I must say that not featuring vocals at all actually turns INGER DE FIER into a too experimental project and even simplistic and linear. The four parts of this demo develops a theme close to the concept of men-machine, cyborg... the perfect hybrid. If the two decide to diversify a little the present effect while guitars to insist on following various passages in additional with vocals, well, I am sure this band shall make a point in an instant. Until then...it is heard and spoken about... and this is much...

ingerdefier@yahoo.com, <http://ingerdefier.tripod.com> Rating: 0.80/1 (02.11)

INSOMNIUM(FIN)-"In The Halls Of Awaiting" CD'02 (55. 39 min, 10 tracks) (CANDLELIGHT)
Finland can be proud of many young bands dedicated to Melodic Death Metal style and INSOMNIUM is just one of them. Founded in 1997, the band records, after two years, its first demo, pretty well quoted in "Terrorizer" magazine, and a year right after the second material is released: "Underneath The Moonlit Waves" demo, due to which they actually signed a contract with the British label. Although nothing distinguishes INSOMNIUM from classic bands, there is certain full of melody and rhythm atmosphere preserving as well rage and violence and it seems like guitars' tunes remind me of first AMORPHIS' album! The throaty voice is very appropriate to such style while the battery, although rather simplistic, actually confers a perfect synchronisation with guitars. This debut, in reality, presents a sample of quality recital, with a smart well mixed sound...so that in the end it grants you with a vision towards the frozen lands and the thousand lakes. A different kind of AMORPHIS debut but in a whole new millennium! Rating: 0.79/1 (01.07)

INTERITUS DEI(ROM)-"The End Of Revelation" tape'01 (BESTIAL)

Well, this is an album of such disappointment I have not enough days to express about! Lack of inspiration... of complex ideas, progressive note of the sound, a bad mixing of instruments with voices, a fade and monotonous Rock rhythm... everything sounds bothering and from time to time even boring! The female voice imitates too much DREAMS OF SANITY and I cannot describe how bad it sounds when the male one is so aggressive and even rather "dry". I don't know what happened with these young musicians because I remember, a couple of years ago, I used to praise their materials. In vain the instruments try to outline better the score since the new sound, which is probably desired to be Gothic Doom Death Metal, is at least mediocre and I am surprised that Adi Mihailov did not think it over before approving to release the album. Such a pity! I have listened to the 9 tracks twice and I am certain I won't rush for ever trying again! "The End Of Revelation" reminded me of THE GATHERING, a band that, after a sensational debut album, "Always", has tricked us with a second material such disagreeable that everybody forgot about it. I just might be wrong... Interitus_dei@yahoo.com. Rating: 0.51/1 (04.03)

INTERITUS DEI(RUS)-"Unholy" CD'02 (52. 59 min, 12 tracks) (PROMUSIC)

First of all, both ambition and devotion towards this style of these musicians are noteworthy! If the former album managed to be quite big disappointment for me, the new one has a completely changed appearance of an entertainment higher level. Unfortunately the sound and mixing are modest despite of an exceptional execution. There is Heavy Metal energy in the guitars; the atmospheric keyboard fills the background and the battery frequently splits the rhythm

starting from fast and violent to melodic and comestible. The female voice sends to opera while the male one is as aggressive as ever. I don't really know why but the voices duet doesn't please me at all, on contrary it bothers me. And to be more correct there is too much of opera for Metal and less of Gothic for the Death inflections. Shortly: a viola intelligently played, oriental roots, profound Epic touches, Symphonic, Gothic, Heavy, Doom and Death Metal. "Unholy" is a well structured album on diverse Metal segments but too knotty for Heavy Metal and excessively violent for Gothic... To translate: a kind of atmospheric Gothic Death with abundant female vocals (out of any recent cliché). Is it as good as it gets? We'll see about that. In my eyes, the album is nothing more or less than another exponent of autochthon scene, remarkable for Romania but modest for the rest of the world. I admit that live the band impresses differently and better reaching admiration. A first-rate track is "Queen Of The Undead"! www.interitus-dei.com Rating: 0.81/1 (08.11)

JACK FROST(AUT)-"Abusing Uglysex Ungod" CD'02 (38. 55 min, 8 tracks) (WAB)

What else can be said or written regarding JACK FROST? It is more than a well known band thanks to the four albums released so far ("Eden", "Elsewhere", "Glow Dying Sun" and "Gloom Rock Asylum") plus lots of gigs all over Europe. What makes the difference next to the former ones? Perhaps the Doom Metal side is slightly shadowed inside Rock valences but the Gothic background is as cold and sinister as ever while slow timbre of male voice points out to first TYPE O NEGATIVE album. In different words, Melodic Gothic Rock of these four musicians is as Dark as ever but more Heavy and rhythmic so that it actually turns this album into a vivid point of attraction even for those who agreed not such sonorities. Personally, I do prefer their first albums as they were rather more "isolated" and inaccessible while this very melodiousness really scares me... Rating: 0.80/1 (17.07)

JUDAS ISCARIOT(USA)-"To Embrace The Corpses Bleeding" CD'02 (38. 14 min, 9 tracks) (RED STREAM)

Akhenaten has written the lyrics of this album during a trip he took in Romania last year. He actually memorized a few legends of these picturesque places. He expresses thorough the booklet a very acid message regarding what he believes it happens on the present musical scene and other details as well, but probably addressed only to elitist people. JUDAS ISCARIOT can be compared with DARK THRONE since Fenriz as well as Akhenaten follow the same certain line of pure underground Black Metal with a primitive and brutal sound. Listening to this album meant for me to travel back in time and I must confess that was a quite enjoyable experience. I even find this album more successful than the last Fenriz' one! Even if many bands prefer modern manner, this very fashionable music...well, JUDAS ISCARIOT's sound is almost identical with the one of five-six years ago, as the old Black Metal note still has its certain charm. Well, it is natural too, as long as he had decided to step on classical Black Metal path keeping certain standards of quality from an album to

another. There might be some people to think with stubbornness that Time desires to get immortalized from time to time... well, their music can sound as good and intriguing as ever in each moment of time! Rating: 0.85/1 (23.02)

KAAMOS(SWE)-"Kaamos" CD'02 (34. 35 min, 9 tracks) (CANDLELIGHT)

Here comes another Death Metal band belonging to Swedish trend! I have not much to write about this album because what these young musicians perform did not impress me at all: the melodic line is commonly blended with the aggressive one, the irritated voices at most denote an artificial hate which is, in other words, and a long time ago faded fashion. It is just Death Black Metal, well carried out but nothing else. Rating: 0.69/1 (28.06)

KARNAK(ITA)-"Melodies Of Sperm Composed" CD'01 (35. 03 min, 9 tracks) (TWELFTH PLANET)

Nothing interesting and neither much of a surprise for me. KARNAK shall not enchant either those who rather prefer extreme brutality or the ones with more domestic and atmospheric tastes. I am afraid I have not any idea of what these four Italians intended to prove on this album... The sound looks like Death Metal, so are the voices but the sinister keyboard doesn't fit here. We might say it is rather a mixture of ATHEIST, SUFFOCATION, NOCTURNUS and MACABRE- absolutely distastefully conceived and interpreted. The lyrics are sick as well or let's say just extreme... I simply observe there is nothing that I've heard or read to be on my taste. If I had to name the quartet's music I just think about Morbid Records as it would have been another appropriate label for the band. From time to time I distinguish Grind or Jazz parts exactly as if they planned their sound to be a parody addressed to all Death Metal fans. I might affirm that such music could indulgently be defined as Experimental Technical Death Metal. There is a notable fact namely the label's endeavour to present a multimedia CD, full of technical data and quality images... karnakdeath@freemail.it. Rating: 0.62/1 (03.03)

KHOLD(NOR)-"Masterpiss Of Pain" CD'01 (34. 36 min, 10 tracks) (MOONFOG)

What great surprise! I have never even heard of this band until now! It seems like Moonfog is quite good at hitting upon new talents even if orientated towards old Black Metal fashion. If you feel like listening to DARK THRONE, HELHAMMER or BATHORY in a fresh adaptation, well, KHOLD is available for you. The evil misanthropic atmosphere surrounds the entire album and, as if it was not enough, the black voice throws your heart out into a sinister morbid darkened world. Excellent sound! Although there is nothing original, KHOLD fascinated me from the very first tunes and I am so excited there are still a few courageous ones who dare venturing to compose music that is not on the top of actual preferences. I would say the four Norwegians play a Grim Norse Black Metal. The bass is rather dominant; that is why the sound impression is extremely grave and cold while the lyrics are in Norwegian language, which is the mother tongue of Old Black Metal. All in all, Gard, Rinn, Eikind and Sarke are not some

anonymous since they collaborated with various bands such as OLD MAN'S CHILD, TULUS, VALHALL or DEATH MISSION. In deed, I was obsessed by these tunes and had no idea why. Well, if you liked STRID, or in better words the legendary EP, then Khold shall straightly touch your hearts. www.khold.com, MOONFOG PRODUCTIONS, Abidersamfunnets Plass 1, 0181 Oslo, Norway, www.moonfog.no. Rating: 0.81/1 (2001)

KRIEG (USA) - "Destruction Ritual" CD'02 (43.56 min, 11 tracks) (RED STREAM)

If I believe and understand for some musicians to affirm that the present Metal scene is infected with different kinds of deceitfulness, well, there are some I do despise. Impaler and Duane Timlin (SARCOPHAGUS, FOREST OF IMPALED) are ready to show us 11 torturing ugly Black Metal tracks, full of hate and primitivism, without effects or various tunes, just a simple linear and too tiresome sound for my ear. Gentlemen, in deed it is a repulsive Black Metal, with abrasive guitars and a drummer plugged in. Besides demos and re-arranged tracks ("Sono il Scherno" for example) KRIEG practically continues the second album line, "The Church", yet rather more violently than ever! This is a way too much for me! It is strange how angelic figures are included on the booklet... They really are sick and need medicine right now! If I ever wish for listening to old style Black Metal, I prefer DARK THRONE or JUDAS ISCARIOT. It seems like, in America, the trend of extreme underground Black Metal, without modern influence, has exploded and REDSTREAM simply is one of the labels that really supports such attitude. No comments... Rating: 0.68/1 (23.02)

LACRIMAS PROFUNDERE (GER) - "Burning: A Wish" CD'01 (45.01 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)

Such a strike this new album! Trust me, it is situated somewhere besides last MY DYING BRIDE album! The male voice's inflexions, the female's voice background... the epic atmosphere, a sad note, peaceful rhythms alternating faster ones, a whipping keyboard, guitars' solos blurring... all is infusive, sober, magnificent! This Dark jewel features a Gothic Doom Death Metal of the highest quality, not at all original yet absolutely inspired in conceiving and elegantly performed! After quite some time of hard work and three more than modest albums, LACRIMAS PROFUNDERE comes in forth with this new sequences and I am so excited an anxious to listen to their new tracks as I have heard the Germans recently entered the studio. Rating: 0.92/1 (10.03)

LACRIMAS PROFUNDERE (GER) - "Fall, I Will Follow" CD'02 (46.04 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)

I've heard of some changes occurred in the line up as if the drum player left or something... well, it is true with one single remark: this happened right after this album was released. What could I tell you about LACRIMAS PROFUNDERE and you didn't know already? This is the fifth album and I don't think I may say the most promising one. The former one seems to be more influential due to a noteworthy perspicuity. The new

compositions maintain the same melancholic aura; Gothic often takes forms of Rock though the depressive calmness continues to mark the entire musical concept. I don't hide myself; indeed, I am fond of this album firstly because of the piano's mystical atmosphere and secondly because of Christopher Schmid's delightful clear voice. This is an album exceeding the Dark Metal note, in MY DYING BRIDE style, entering the commercial area, with real tendencies towards a pessimistic gloomy Rock, still listenable, bursting of beautiful Doom Death elements. I wouldn't put my hand in fire for the band's original background but I am not blind and nor deaf not to admit that, album after album, they actually succeeded in charting a distinctive style with a particular identifying sound. Well, maybe some Alternative/Grunge hues, besides noisy tunes too fast and rhythmic, do wrong to the Metal atmosphere of this material... like what recently happened to ANATHEMA or THINE... Otherwise... all tends to reach a superlative status. www.lacrimas.com Rating: 0.81/1 (01.11)

LACRIMOSA (SWI) - "Fassade" CD'01 (40.51 min, 8 tracks) (HALL OF SERMON/ROCRIS DISC)

The album standard timing includes another 10 minutes unlike this promo version that I have in my hands, which represent as well the eight tracks but shorter and artificially ended. But let us talk about the sound. Tilo Wolff turns back to the dark mysterious atmosphere he expressed (and used us up) inside his first albums giving now up that dynamic explosive Gothic-Rock, more than entertaining, that he featured since "Inferno" till "Elodia". Although he started again to collaborate with the Philharmonic, the tracks sound completely different. The melancholic shades alternate with deep romantic ones and tragic echoes embrace the dramatic parts. Tillo's voice is much more sober, rather sad, with literary intonations... While the guitars seem to overwhelm more obstacles and the piano is majestic. Ann's voice is as charming as ever ("Senses") while sopranos and choirs simply are at the right place... Everything is growing up on symphonic background supported by multiple instruments which sole purpose is to fulfill the atmosphere. I cannot say it is LACRIMOSA's best album because I think the sound is too complex and the ideas had not had the opportunity to reach perfect harmony so that there would not be any notion of time or breakage of reality, contemplation... not in just eight tracks. It is an elaborated album, excellently played yet without inspiration. I might be rather too subjective and hard on him but I simply cannot believe Tillo won't conceive another masterpiece at least as dramatic meditative and mystical as "Satura"! Until that day it is good to see that LACRIMOSA has come back leaving behind regularity and commercial aspects for those who are perfect for such. As a humble conclusion, "Fassade" hardly touches a certain level that can only be described by terms like fascinating, emotional or dreamlike. Rating: 0.82/1 (13.01)

LEX TALIONIS (FRA) - "Inhuman Violence" CD'02 (29.14 min, 8 tracks) (DEADSUN)
Cyber Brutal Death Metal? I must

admit I was extremely well surprised by this project of which I need to say its drum-machine/battery seems plugged in at 380 V! The voice is aggressive, guitars are very fast, and the entire sound is fresh, full of energy despite the fact that the resulted atmosphere seems soft. As I am so tired of widespread Death Metal bands, LEX TALIONIS simply brings a bright spot of colour into this scene and I am convinced that for the very future a lot of good things shall be heard referring to the French quartet. Unfortunately, the album is too succinct for me to write more about it. Rating: 0.79/1 (03.04)

LIMBONIC ART (NOR) - "The Ultimate Death Worship" CD'02 (51.48 min, 8 tracks) (NOCTURNAL ART)

Morfeus and Daemon make a real proof that Black Metal is still on top and that is why the fourth album of theirs insists on the same Nordic orientation, in lack of imagination, but in force and with fastness. In fact, only "Moon In The Scorpio" could be considered a masterpiece of uniqueness, the other two simply not bringing any of innovation as far as Norwegian Black Metal is regarded. Back to the new material! There was a common opinion worldwide that the two members' activity inside ZYKLON and DIMENSION F3H shall induce sooner or later LIMBONIC ART abolition. It didn't happen but neither much of a gain I cannot see with this album! Even if the execution is immaculate, the Black/Death Metal tunes seem to be as common and alike as EMPEROR or any other band promoted by Samoth' label. Those superb cosmic elements featured on the debut can only be presumed in a few tracks but in a diffuse note extremely pale and observed solely because of a vigilant audition, eventually on headphones. Why I am not impressed of this album? Simply because, as long as avant-garde or innovation are in a severe lack for the band's sound, I don't see any reason at all to listen to this material more than once! Of course, if there are any longer some pathetic nostalgic or passionate fans of unconventional modern Black Metal from '90' period... well, in that case... this very album might be a good occasion to enjoy! Otherwise, I believe only a vivid curiosity might lead you to such a conjectural audition... www.limbonic.com Rating: 0.80/1 (28.08)

LUNARIS (NOR) - "...The Infinite" CD'02 (40.33 min, 10 tracks) (ELITIST/EARACHE)

All recommendations advanced regarding such name were at least impressing: Asgeir Mickelson (SPIRAL ARCHITECT, BORKNAGAR), Azarak (SPIRAL ARCHITECT, SATYRICON), MAZTEMA (SPIRAL ARCHITECT, MANITOU) or BALFORI (ex-1349). "Against" such line-up there is no way to imagine otherwise than a super production. Having a Death Metal background with Black Metal roots, LUNARIS brings up a direction that can be described as highly Progressive: extended and diverse passages, miscellaneous voices-yet the Black one (Balfori) seems to be much too brutal in comparison with the epic Heavy (Maztema) one-and keyboard is the only instrument trying to (and actually succeeding in) binding these extremes in such manner of high impetuosity. The aggressiveness sample is at its highest state... everything sounds

perfect although I find a little exaggerated the Power/Progressive direction (pressure?)... at least, it is for my ears. It seems like choosing for such trend to interweave with extreme styles tends to become quite a fashion...but if we are realistic enough, we must admit that the Epic parts indeed act on behalf of the entire sound in a positive way. Of course, it is not exactly my cup of tea since my limit, as far as Progressive is regarded, has been already settled by WINDS while the rest of iron curtains end with Avant-garde Metal. Nevertheless I enjoyed listening to an amazing battery, a high quality Black/Death, entertaining guitars' tunes and a pleasant-sounding keyboard even if not at all bombastic. The rest of the instruments don't belong to Metal a prop which I usually promote... and that is why I prefer stopping here. Probably the band's future is to be a bright one despite of the fact that Asgeir's battery has been replaced with Janos' /V.E.G.A.... Time shall tell if the band's leader, the guitar player M, has chosen or not a successful musical direction. What matters for the time being is the release of this very debut which happens to be one of the best for this year... especially if we refer to the performing manner, which is, by all means, an elegant one! www.elitistrecords.co.uk Rating: 0.82/1 (17.08)

MACTATUS (NOR) - "Suicide" CD'02 (41.26 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)

Deception! It is incredible how limited such band could be! After three albums, more than interesting, full of Nordic extreme and atmospheric Black Metal, the six Norwegians have decided to return to the roots of the style presenting something which was a fashion some years ago! Unfortunately, MACTATUS did not take a step forward with "Suicide" but rather let itself be lead by extreme impulses and no more than this. Hate, violence, death... are themes super exploited which, in Black Metal version, have been consumed during all these years. There is one other important detail to be mentioned: Peter Tagtgren produced the album which means that the recording and mastering are really exceptional. As for the rest, it is just another Norwegian Black Metal band with a quality sound, gifted instrumental performers and this is it! As far as the musical direction is regarded, I guess the album can hardly pass the "examination"... Fortunate is only the interpretation manner. It is probably one album which can only pleasantly surprise those who recently discovered Black Metal life-style. Rating: 0.69/1 (14.06)

MALEVOLENT CREATION (USA) - "The Will To Kill" CD'02 (41.37 min, 11 tracks) (ARCTIC MUSIC)

Phil Fasciana seems not to get tired ever! Despite of line-up changes and difficulties he always maintains to keep alive a Death Metal legend fighting against all debutants of this styled already considered dead! What can I say about this band? Well, the previous line-up was once again broken since, except Rob Barrett, a famous guitar player, his colleagues of generation left him! But here we are facing: a drum machine plugged at 380 V, angry morbid vocals, expressive bass and ravaging guitars with incredible solos that outshine any imagination. It is a good album in the same classical death

Metal style with no modern influences but solely American sick aggressive technical Death Metal. Yet there is nothing remarkable or original and neither new... just the usual explosive atmosphere we got used with within all seven albums released so far. Personally I still keep as valid my impression that "The Ten Commandments" shall always be the band's best album and one of the legendary ones as far as this style is concerned! I respect devotion, ambition but I cannot see more than it is! Success is still a matter of past and not present for this band! www.arcticmusicgroup.com Rating: 0.81/1 (23.11)

MAY RESULT (SER)-"Tmina" tape'02 (BESTIAL)

One thing I have regrets about is not being able to go to Deva Festival, last year, although I was at maximum two hours away- by car. Extra-musical business kept me that weekend away from my home as well as from the Festival. During that festival I could have seen and heard these Serbians whose debut album pleasantly surprised me. The new material seems to be in unanimity better quoted although the melodic and modern shades master now the entire sound (or maybe because of this aspect!). That Symphonic Black Metal embracing classical music turned now into a fashionable atmospheric Black Metal with abundant keyboard and demonic voice, incandescent guitars and Death battery. There can also be distinguished a violin though in very few times... all in all, the whole sound is complex bad mixed and with too much background noise. I just don't understand why such great album could not reach a more professional studio... keyboard is the only element covering the background while the drums together with guitars and voices create a bothering even exhausting chaos. Anyway, it is a shame... with such good music... These Serbians ideas are very good and the album concept is profound with certain weight. Maybe the tape-recording is the reason for such execrable state!? We live in III Millennium and still have a hard time in listening to a music excellently conceived but released in technical conditions of low quality. It is sad... the Serbians deserve more, much more than a critique, which I myself am not glad to write. Yet you are the ones to decide if this tape is worth or not the money. As far as the booklet is concerned, it should be OK. Otherwise, if any opportunity to see MAY RESULT in Romania might occur... I assure you I wouldn't miss it once again! Rating: 0.78/1 (03.03)

MAYHEM (NOR)-"European Legions" CD'01 (47.07 min, 12 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

I sometimes come to a tricky dilemma, why trying to make money, by all means, on the back of almost any musical accessories?! If being more precise, I must say the first 7 tracks are MAYEM live, including various albums, while "Chainsaw Gustfauck" seems to benefit of the best interpretation ever or perhaps the most appropriate studio version. The other 5 tracks are pre-productions of "Grand Of Declaration Of War", that is to say the unpolished and raw version. It would have been correct for this CD to appear before last MAYEM album. You should be happy for not buying it already, since you had spent money for 7 live tracks and 12 unrepresentative

wiredrawn ones, at least as far as MAYEM's sound is concerned. You do not miss a thing if not listening to this CD, as the sound itself is cheap. You can still fulfill an expensive whim: Maniac, Necrobutter, Hellhammer and Blasphemer in concert. If the French label had the inspiration of including at least a video track, perhaps it would have been justified releasing this material. Otherwise, you and only can contradict me! Rating: 0.61/1 (2001)

MEPHISTOPHELESS (GER)-"Modern Instinct's Purity" CD'02 (49.03 min, 8 tracks) (LAST EPISODE)

Although there were many line-up modifications, The German sextet had arrived at their third album and did a very good job in consolidating their position in Germany. Throughout these new tracks, MEPHISTOPHELESS actually returns to a less atmospheric style as aggressiveness and fastness are now their strong points. From another point of view, we are witnesses to a

and well quoted all over the world. Still following the same line, MERCENARY comes back in forth even more vigorously with a Melodic Death Metal in a Scandinavian manner and lots of Power or Heavy tints so that MACHINE HEAD, FEAR FACTORY or NEVERMORE passages often could be recognized. It is a kind of HYPOCRISY that oscillates between melodiousness and brutality while the two voices, besides the keyboard, arouse an extreme power as well as a melancholic atmosphere too on a Death Metal background. I would have desired to reveal more about this material but I am afraid that such common approach obliges me not to continue. A fashionable album well implemented and probably received as well... and this should be all! www.mercenary.dk Rating: 0.71/1 (23.02)

MERIDIAN(SWI)-"The Seventh Sun" CD'02 (47.56 min, 9 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

This is just another amalgam desired to

must admit that MORGUL definitely overcomes any further expectations...and as a matter of fact the album was recorded in Terje Refsnes' studio (the same as TRISTANIA, CARPATHIAN FOREST...). Of course, I cannot say the same thing as far as innovation is regarded... as this album seems to be in lack of such and moreover has become already a subject of no one interest. And when I come to think that Swiss was the land where from SADNESS opened a new vision of music... I start to feel strange... Rating: 0.81/1 (17.08)

MEZZERSCHMITT (NOR) -"Weltherschaft" MCD'02 (17.58 min, 4 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

I am deadly confused! Almost everybody passes on discussion subjects referring to the elite of Norwegian Metal, new and pure concepts... while I discover else! This project is guided by German concepts as far as the lyrics are regarded but as for the nicknames as well. The labels says the music ideology has nothing in common with politics, neo-Nazism, but... in the place you name the elite, there is no possible way not to identify yourself as exclusivist or extremist... but... it doesn't matter. No comment! From the sound perspective: synthetic, artificial, created on and by real instruments but in no particularity from Black Metal trend. Although they are exponents of bands like MAYHEM (Blasphemer) or RED HARVEST (keys), it would be unfair to say the trio comes to play a common style. No way! Perhaps that avant-garde current has still something to say in their sound but I find almost impossible to define this mixture of Heavy Black Metal astounding riffs, a weird voice, Dark atmosphere, extra-spatial keyboard and Death Metal battery (Hellhammer). You can try by yourselves! Rating: 0.79/1 (22.10)

MONUMENTUM (ITA)-"Ad Nauseam" CD'02 (49.50 min, 10 tracks) (TATRA)

I have impatiently waited for this album and I must confess I really experienced a great shock for the new sound! I am not in the position to appreciate if it is a change in better or worse, but I definitely can say it is an impressive charismatic one as well as ever. Everything started with a comfortable mood opened by "Last Call For Life" a track of a Dark aura which reminds me of a similar certain atmosphere I meet at "In Absentia Christi". I'd even say it is the most "edible" and accessible one featured on the entire album. "Angor Vacui" has no connection with melody or rhythm... it is just like engaging into play-drama-of effects based on messages coming from desperate sky pilots... some whispers... and... the end of it. "Distance" embraces a more atmospheric presence and the female voice is the guiding light... while the sound of the instruments simply doesn't cease to bemuse my ears. "A Tainted Retrospective" is a progression full of multidimensional dynamic... due to the instruments'effect yet also because the insightful clear male voice which is a kind of accelerator shaping the tune's structure. Here from it starts to unwrap, big and strong. Alternative, Pop and Electro movements while the Dark ones are "feeding" the background. "Perche Il Mio Amore" is a cover version of which my comments



Black Metal relatively brutal with plenty of Death and Thrash Metal parts, a pale keyboard, demonic voices and choirs so that everything seems to be a be in command of chaos. I have heard that the album received quite high references and I still stand and simply wonder "why, what for?". Just for a good interpretation, without any shade of originality or fresh elements? It is strange... well I wasn't awestruck by this album. Finally... it must be mentioned that the CD contains a modest video-clip captured and recorded during Wave Gothic Tour din August 2000. Rating: 0.78/1 (10.02)

MERCENARY (DEN)-"Everblack" CD'02 (53.45 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

The Danish sextet made its appearance throughout their debut, in 1998, "First Breath", an album regarded in favour

be successful! To be more precise it is about four Swiss who started to play Black Metal; a couple of years ago contacted Jack D Ripper/MORGUL and here came pretty quickly their debut. The style they approach, as declared, is Symphonic Black Metal and seems to contain all marks such direction requires, from melodic guitars and rhythmic battery till the very presence of bombastic keyboard and atmospheric echoes. This is a promising debut with a 100% Norwegian sound and first rate Black Metal but no more than this. I keep asking myself why there is not a distinctive personal image for Swiss Black Metal? Why can't they have an individual representation? I've been fed up with copies and so called performances of Nordic brutalities in music field...even if there are cases in which the manner is excellent! And I

are superfluous since my Italian is close to "niente" and moreover I hadn't the opportunity to listen to Fausto Rossi's original version... but there is a strange fusion, beyond words, of Pop, Wave, Techno and Rock. "Numana" belongs to an instrumental sphere as it is a track of such and has certain warmth of calm meditative tunes where there are as well some shades of Ambient/Industrial. "No redemption" is tune of which... the title says all it has to be spoken... a baritone voice sometimes becoming whispering melting inside a grave piano harmony with staccato rhythms... it is just a superb return of the Dark sound into a timeless unmarked space. "I Ständ Nowhere" sets in motion with a female voice which reminds me of old THE GATHERING and there can be distinguished as well some Metal constituents in the company of a dramatic background which is built firmly by drums and battery... it seems like some guitar echoes arise and the atmosphere becomes smoother and smoother... perhaps due to the ardour of such effusive voice... "Reaping For Abel" absolutely surpass any phantasm... the piano, the male voice inflections (a low but outstanding voice reaching similarities with IN THE WOODS...)... are simply magnificent and the whole track induces a nostalgic romantic aura where you are guided by poetic shadows... theatrical ones... and all in all it creates a counterfeit introspection which is all of a sudden engraved by the incoming tunes of last musical succession... namely "Under Monochrome Rainbow". Following Alternative Electro, the Italians endeavour to forward simultaneously through all instruments a certain message... and I assume the track would be just perfect for an action motion picture in which the final act is just about to happen... like a complex recital of events structured on artistic ingredients, the voice is the point key and is escorted by a battery rhythm almost repetitive and even bothering... Perhaps too much of a rhythmic session for my tastes. I just entirely described you the last MONUMENTUM album! What have you understood? Almost nothing... is it right? Or perhaps everything... I cannot say it is about an avant-garde music... but there is more to be stilled: what they perform now has not the slightest connection with any common musical trend. It is just MONUMENTUM, a baffling sound that perplexes you... yet in the same time it is a sound full of mystery while the desire of exploring is just the little engine which keeps working in the listener's mind! It might be Rock/Metal for Pop fans and rather too Disco for consecrated Dark Wave disciples. From another point of view, it is an album requesting for exquisite patient in order to carefully listen to... and it is away beyond words can define it... www.monumentum.it Rating: 0.87/1 (08.10)

MOONSORROW (FIN)-"Voimasta ja Kunniasta" CD'02 (SPIKEFARM)
Oahhh, what a lovely surprise! Maybe it is the best Finnish Melodic Viking Black Metal album, placed somewhere at the same level with last FINNTROLL's! The epic dimension reminds me of BATHORY and the warlike magnificent choirs are impressive! The entire album is dominated by a Nordic folk traditional aura yet melancholic and nostalgic as

well. Heavy passages are in great resonance with the atmospheric ones while the bombastic keyboard surrounds the whole sound. It would be a shame to characterize just in a few words the new sound, that is why I simplify by saying that "Of Strength And Honour" (which should be the translation of the album's title) indicates quite a precious Metal jewel that should not miss anyone's collection! I recommend this album deep from my heart! www.moonsorrow.cjb.net. Rating: 0.91/1 (24.02)

MORGENSTERN (GER)-"Rauch" CD'02 (47.10 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)
I have a difficult time to understand why so much often Metal is combined with traditional Folk parts in a manner with no epic structure, which is actually the required equilibrium of musical composition. Right after IN EXTREMO launched a new trend, latest bands seem to jam of duplicating such direction. MORGENSTERN is at the third release under Napalm label and the one to be the best so far. As far as I am regarded, this mixture of Metal with Folk Medieval, Power or even Punk on a Gothic Rock skeleton disgusts me because it is nothing but a storm in a glass! I am not fascinated of such and I don't think I'll ever be! The voices feature German messages, flute and clarinet are notable from the very first tunes, and guitars don't excel in virtuosity while the battery seems ad infinitum to fall asleep. I find it dried out, with no colour and probably this album might get pleasing solely to disciples of such style. So, at first was "Feuertaufe", then "Heute ist die Rache mein" and now this new material followed and I believe it is certainly dedicated to German Metal fans! www.morgenstern-band.de Rating: 0.68/1 (23.09)

MORIFADE (SWE)-"Imaginarium" CD'02 (53.37 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)
Power Metal re-gained the supremacy in Europe and this is a fact that pleases many people. For me... I still feel nothing regarding this style in spite of the true fact that, as far as instrumental part is concerned, these bands excel in quality. I find annoying that thin embarrassing voice for a Metal style and it upsets me because if I wish for something more domestic and positive... there is always Heavy Metal I prefer. Back to MORIFADE, let's say Epic Melodic Power might be the approached style with incandescent keyboard and guitars' atmospheric riffs. The rest doesn't matter, at least not for me. Rating: 0.68/1 (02.04)

MOURNING BELOVETH (EIR)-"Dust" CD'02 (74.51 min, 8 tracks) (SENTINEL)
This is a style I believed it died! Well, that Doom Metal, in British version, lent and depressive returns into our sight throughout a new band from Ireland. This very CD was released in 2001 having now included some bonus tracks. Saint Vitus, Count Raven, Cathedral, Solstice... might be some bands of inspiration for these Irish. The tracks are extremely long with prolong guitars tunes, a clear voice integrated into a background of throaty voices, Doom/Death Metal rhythms, a sad atmosphere of isolation and loneliness. What I find curious is that the band was founded 10 years ago! Recently they managed to sign a contract with

Aftermath Records and this month they are supposed to release the second album entitled "The Sullen Sulcus". The entire aura created by MOURNING BELOVETH is a darken one and passive, full of mystery and without any shade of hope. I have no idea if it is the best idea to continue to perform a style that was en vogue almost 10-15 years ago! I liked the album although I found not any new element or original in comparison with what I used to listen to a long time ago! Perhaps it is only the n o s t a l g i a ! www.mourningbeloveth.com Rating: 0.80/1 (23.10)

MOURNING ENDS (GER)-"Kriegerseele" CD'02 (43.20 min, 11 tracks) (ARS METALLI)
This is another German band as well; this time oriented towards modern Melodic Black Metal, very atmospheric with Pagan and Viking tints, a lot of keyboard and a demonic voice. From time to time, there are clear warlike voices, a few choirs, female voices, flute and Heavy guitars. They don't play bad yet neither enchant because these six CHORONZON and ALZHEIMER ex-members' music is fade less original and with no inspiration. It is just a simple band performing much better than the rest of the bands that did not sign yet with a label. I believe it will soon disappear if not planning to impose a more professional style. I grant them with a maximal quotation for the booklet. www.MourningEnds.de. Rating: 0.65/1 (23.02)

MURDER CORPORATION (SWE)-"Tagged and Bagged" CD'01 (32.15 min, 11 tracks) (DISPLEASED)
Such boring thing to listen to common Death Metal bands! That's DERANGED case, a Swedish band that, at the end of 1995, has decided to give birth to a new Metal project as brutal and violent as well since the only difference is the live-look of the three ones, performing on the stage, disguised with cowls. Murderers, manic massacre disciple... it's time for the gathering around those infuriated people! It should be exactly on your taste. The explosive Death/Thrash Metal MURDER CORPORATION performs on their second album could only enchant by guitars' fastness and throaty voice. Otherwise, we can speak about virtuosity, lack of originality and inspiration as well, linear even common tunes, ravishing battery and holocaust in true sense of words! Either I was born much too earlier or usual fade Death Metal fascinates me no more. From the other side of the picture, brutal music fans shall certainly be satisfied to have listen those new tracks: expect to be tagged and bagged! Let us take a short look at the band's discography: "Blood Revolution 2050" MCD, "Kill" MCD, "Retract The Hostile" 7"EP, Split with VOMITORY, "Murder Corporation" CD, "Whole lotta Murder Going On" CD, Split with Grind Buto CD. MURDER CORPORATION, Angavegen 2, 24562, Hjarup, Sweden, http://members.tripod.de/murdercorp. Rating: 0.62/1 (2001)

MURDER SQUAD (SWE)-"Unsane, Insane and Mentally Deranged" CD'01 (33.15 min, 12 tracks) (PAVEMENT)
The ENTOMBED members and other DISMEMBER ones have decided, in

1993, to found a Death Metal band with the purpose to follow AUTOPSY line. No longer after a few rehearsals and two live performances, the four entered the studio and recorded this debut album. Nothing new or out of the ordinary, just Swedish Death Metal, a stifled background rather weird...some aggressiveness and that should be all as far as MURDER SQUAD is concerned. It is interesting only for those who still find an option in classic Death Metal. PAVEMENT MUSIC/LUNA PRESS & PUBLICITY, Sjöholmén PL 4118, 731197, Koping, Sweden, www.pavementmusic.com, www.lunasoundrecording.com. Rating: 0.58/1 (2001)

MUSTAN KUUN LAPSET (FIN)-"Suruntuoja" CD'02 (43.13 min, 8 tracks) (NORTHERN SOUND)
Once again melodious Metal, once again Black Metal! Maybe it is good to have such bands as well but not so large in numbers! The oldest and luckiest bands have already picked up the fruits of such success! Mass pressure-inertia makes the labels of today to promote and have great expectations in such musical style! Aggressive voices combined with recital ones even mighty ones, Heavy guitars from time to time rather too melodic, abundant keyboard in melodious passages, acoustic bombastic atmospheric interludes, simple rhythmic battery with fast twists... these are well known scenarios and in lack of interest for today's request! It doesn't sound bad at all and I see no fundamental criticizing to bring in here! Perhaps it is only that they come a little bit too late to impress anyone! Or maybe not...there still might be some nostalgic Black Metal disciples who hadn't enough of this style! A good interpretation and this is all I may appreciate! Moreover, the lyrics are in Finnish, therefore any mixture of terms like Pagan Heathen or Viking Metal is quite fitting for this band! http://mkl.cjb.net Rating: 0.80/1 (22.10)

MY DYING BRIDE (UK)-"The Dreadful Hours" CD'01 (70.49 min, 8 tracks) (PEACEVILLE)
A good band and an album at the same level incite me to have more detailed and critical comments. To my disappointment I daily read and find reviews that refuse to reflect the reality for the readers, just the case of this very album. When saying MY DYING BRIDE something must vibrate inside one's soul and this should be a real fact since this band is a vivid legend featuring on Dark Metal scene! All technical details came out directly from Aaron, some time ago, inside issue no. 7 of "Kogaionon"; therefore I see no sense for other comments regarding this chapter. It is just that the sound that reminds me of BAL SAGOTH again, which is once again natural because we speak about the same person namely John Maudlin. Of course, in studio, Yasmin Ahmed was present this time too and I should write down that her keyboard's tunes, especially on the track "A Cruel Taste Of Winter", have nothing in common with the band she usually plays in EBONYLAKE! In direct comparison with the English' first albums, the new compositions are not capable to bring new aspects, on contrary, are even paler as far as inspiration is implied...yet with one single remark: much better performed. On the other hand, if we

take in account that MDB focused, almost four years ago, on an embarrassing experimental Gothic sound (Pop!!!), well, then, "The Dreadful Hours" must definitely be regarded as a masterpiece. The straight reality is that the seven tracks follow the same line "The Light at the End of the World" started but much more elaborated and arranged whereas Aaron's voice gives birth to an unimaginable Epic Dark Metal atmosphere! "Le Figlie Della Tempesta" is no doubts, a track to be distinguished from the very first tunes so that guitars, drums, keyboard, Aaron voice's inflexions... just everything sounds magnificent! At the end of the material, a re-edition of "The Return of the Beautiful" simply makes the proof of these instrumentalists' skillfulness and maturity! I can even affirm that Calvin once used to do with his guitar is harmoniously and professionally replaced by Hamish. Yet, if coming to old good times, I need to confess I still miss Martin's violin!!! Above all, we should be aware of so many changes in line up that happened during these 12 years of its existence... and the most important thing is that the band continues to play and, moreover, the new album's sound has the gift to shadow everything that was released last year in Gothic Death Metal field! And this is not all, the CD owns an exceptional digi-pack! Do I sense a shadow of doubt? Well, if so, it certainly means that you understood nothing and it would be better for you to retire now!!! www.mydyingbride.org. Rating: 0.93/1 (10.03)

MY DYING BRIDE (UK) - "Voice Of The Wretched" CD'02 (74. 53 min, 10 tracks)

(PEACEVILLE)

What about this? The eternal distasteful manner labels use to make some more bucks upon fans' credibility! After I said such to myself, rather disinterested than curious, I played the CD. Surprise! I found a high quality sound, modicum applause and an incredible atmosphere! MY DYING BRIDE leads us through some of the most impressive moments of their history, from "Symphonair Infernus..." or "Turn Loose The Swans" to "A Cruel Taste of Winter". Of course, there are as well jewelries such as "The Cry Of Mankind" or "The Snow In My Hand", an ultra atmospheric realm with a strong impact to the public. What can I say? As a declared fan of this band, I cannot help myself in appreciating this "Best Of" in a live version! I would truthfully be enchanted to see/hear them live but since technically speaking this is impossible, I can only close my eyes and pump up the volume of this very CD. This is an irreproachable recording while the execution is slightly similar with the one featured on their albums (if it wasn't for the keyboard, which is more intense)... a real surprise for me, although I haven't listened to anything new... as the gig was in spring 2001, in a club in Holland. Rating: 0.90/1 (18.08)

MYRIADS (NOR) - "Introspection" CD'02 (74. 16 min, 9 tracks)

(NAPALM)

Inside "Kogaionon" issue no. 7 you could have perused an ample interview with Alexander Twiss, the band's leader, regarding their debut album entitled "In Spheres Without Time". If up to me that material was good but in lack of brilliance, it seems like receiving much more favorable remarks for the metallic

mass media. The new compositions strongly develop a progressive technical and even sophisticated side of these Nordic musicians' Gothic Black Metal. The very sound is very complex whereas knotty and less accessible for fans of undemanding melodiousness, male and female voices are now followed by diverse choirs, the instrumentalists are focused on the variety of the score, the piano becomes heard clearer... and I must say that everything sounds professional and elegant yet... I don't know... too many ideas in just 9 tracks! If for the former sound the "colour" was missing, as it really was synthetic and barren, now we can enjoy a rather too pastel sound interesting interpreted if paying attention when listening to. One thing, I believe it took too much time for this album to be released... But, from a certain point of view I guess it was worth it. Still you are the ones to decide what should be the qualification and quality of these new series. <http://come.to/Myriads>. Rating: 0.82/1 (30.03)

MYRKSOG (NOR) - "Superior Massacre" CD'02 (33. 36 min, 10 tracks)

(CANDLELIGHT)

Oh... such expectations for this album from all over...! Subsequent to almost three years from the debut, ODIUM & ZYKLON members release a new album placed in the same common and in lack of originality Death Metal sphere. Which is: anger, aggressiveness, speed, linear resembling tracks... and nothing else. If I listened to this album ten years ago I would have said: excellent instrumentalists as apocalypse has come! Well, now, when Death Metal has already presented all miscellaneous forms derived from, along with famous traditional bands in this field, I'd say it is difficult just to appreciate and/or praise the sound's brutality and musician's virtuosity. If you want, this new album is a good sample of violent Death Metal situated somewhere at the junction of European and American shapes... it might be revolving for those who devour classical forms of such style. For me it is another album of which I can write right now as being well executed yet destined to get lost in the multitude of Death Metal albums' history. Rating: 0.78/1 (23.11)

MYSTIC CIRCLE (GER) - "The Great Beast" CD'01 (43. 03 min, 9 tracks)

(MASSACRE/ROCRIS DISC)

It is interesting how good Germans when promoting their own bands are! This quartet is at its four studio album and I can admit it sounds the best of all!!! Powerful guitars, pronounced voice, atmospheric keyboard, female voice, perhaps a German replication of CRADLE or DIMMU... unfortunately, this is all we can listen to here. Not a grain of originality, neither of inspiration, it is just one of the luckiest German bands, that conquered Metal scene due to its modern and fashionable sound. If it were not for the general Black Metal success, I guess Massacre would not have signed with MYSTIC CIRCLE, not in a million years. But if there is money on the stake, as far as this style might produce, then, why not following the same path Nuclear Blast or Century Media does? The album is a successful one, no doubt, from the concept point to the interpretation and it would be a huge mistake not to underline this exact aspect. It is just a representative sample of modern Black Metal, which should

enchant all this style disciples. www.mystic-circle.de, Rating: 0.78/1 (2001)

NECROPHAGIA (USA) - "Cannibal Holocaust" MCD'01 (17. 40 min, 5 tracks)

(SEASON OF MIST)

From the very beginning, it is not about a new NECROPHAGIA album, but a few rare tracks released occasionally in various demos. This is a tribute to Euronymous and only one single new uncensored track, "Cannibal Holocaust", while the sound, characterized by an alert rhythm, is very clear. I am sure that the material would have been disregarded if the CD had not enclosed a video-clip featuring frames from a real horror, extremely violent, and dangerous movie picture-I would say all susceptible heart ache people must be very careful! Don't you really understand it is absolutely outrageous to tape your own death or to eat, besides cannibals, rests of a friend of yours? What do you think about watching a pregnant woman being desecrated no longer after committing adultery? I remember I have seen this movie (some use to call it documentary) almost 15 years ago and I was very stupefied. For now on, you "benefit" of only of a few frames yet real and horror enough. For it is Thrash, Black, Death, Gore or Horror, I do not think it would make a difference the etiquette, as the most important thing is that Phil, Killjoy, Jared, Wayne and Frediablo are not normal, while deviated is a term too sweet for what they have in those deranged minds. Try imagining, for a second, there still are other musical projects featuring them in line-up, such as EIBON, AMICUSS, ENOCH, RAVENOUS, HELLPIG, WURDULAK, GORELORD, SOUTHERN ISOLATION or VIKING CROWN. Either they are very sick, or I am too innocent... Uhhhhhhhhhhhh! www.necrophagia.com. Rating: 0.67/1 (2001)

NECROPHOBIC (SWE) - "Bloodhymns" CD'02 (46. 00 min, 10 tracks)

(HAMMERHEART)

Well, a legendary band arrives at its fourth album which is as Heavy and fresh as "The Third Antichrist" so that now is more forceful and dynamic than ever. There is also a sad point referring to their Death Metal as it is more than common, constant in intensity and even monotonous. "Bloodhymns" is a sample of aggressive brutality, OK and interesting at a first audition but only for those who experience nostalgia regarding this style. I don't see what else I might say about a style that thousands bands approached in last years except that this common orientation suffocates this very Death Metal scene. www.necrophobic.net Rating: 0.80/1 (03.04)

NEGURA BUNGET (ROM) - "N'Crugu Bradului" CD'03 (54. 02 min, 4 tracks)

(CODE666)

It's been a while since Negru & Co. had released a new material! I must admit I've been kind of shocked by the new sound because the traditional influences are very obvious from the very beginning and the atmospheric line seems to confer a new breath to this band image. Don't think they are not brutal any more or that they gave up a certain primitivism developed so well in the past! It is about the synth that is even more present now and that actually conducts all the instruments,

especially within the parts of autochthon folklore where it definitely is the key element of the sound. The four tracks are extremely long, over 12 minutes each, the aggressive vocals are interrupted by a recited voice and the guitars keep the same tonality and orientation, which is Raw Fast Black Metal with no compromises but without technique or virtuosity. The drums play again a dominant role in the band's sound as the explosive rhythms practically discharge a huge energy. Although the sound is more professional now, NEGURA BUNGET still is in lack of perfection at this chapter since the final mixing is brut with no delicate touches. It may be possible for this to be the very desire of the members but I believe that in the third Millennium the mixing quality should definitely matter as a rule to be followed. Otherwise, this is a JUDAS ISCARIOT in a Romanian manner with lots of Epic Pagan Folk/Traditional tints, rather more complex and with obvious roots in the pagan ancestors' mythology. Well, I guess it is natural for you to expect the entire material to be in the traditional language and for the booklet as well as for the video-clip to feature an artistic facet... well, this goes for sure, superlatives are the only ones that can describe the digipack! The band's site was re-touched and now, the entire NEGURA BUNGET universe is connected with Dacian lands and Zalmoxis mythology. I believe this is by far the most profound album of theirs but there are chances to be as well the most introverted one in spite of a great Primitive Black Metal dimension! However NEGURA BUNGET still is the only respectable Black Metal band from Romania and the new album shall beyond doubt strike all curious fans! www.negurabunget.com Rating: 0.89/1 (09.12)

NIGHTWISH (FIN) - "Over The Hills and Far Away" CD'01 (51. 14 min, 10 tracks)

(SPINEFARM)

I actually cannot find too many things to say about this band as long as their new CD presents solely three fresh tracks of which the first (a Gary Moore cover version) is in fact a traditional one in Finland and in deed there is also a flourishing (and quite juicy-in live performance) ballad entitled "Away". Otherwise, just live tracks and nothing else. This is another product released exclusively for money! When it is about DVD, I assume it worth spending money, well, in this CD case, I am not so sure! Perhaps Tarja's voice might change dramatically my opinion... Rating: 0.68/1 (31.01)

NIGHTWISH (FIN) - "Century Child" CD'02 (50. 25 min, 10 tracks)

(SPINEFARM)

Well, well... quite some blaze... some praises, superlatives only to describe this last album of the Finns! Even the most enraged Blackers seem to be attracted to NIGHTWISH! Subsequent to my unenthusiastic review for "Wishmaster" album, I really thought the new sequences would kick me even harder! Fortunately, it didn't happen so! If you ask what it is about this music... I can tell you: nothing new, just inciting rhythms for shaking hairs, a super monotonous battery and guitars embracing a tiresome Heavy Power Progressive easily to imitate for anyone. Tarja's voice features no new sounds and neither spectacular modulation, the bombastic keyboard seems to be in

lack of inspiration while the male voice performed by the bass player desperately tries to change something in the faded NIGHTWISH look but with no luck. But if we gaze into a different perspective, well, no doubt, it is about a well-executed album, a quality recording, live choirs and the participation of a professional percussion orchestra... and we can go back to "Wishmaster". Well, we are talking about NIGHTWISH and all five musicians are indeed professional! "Oceanborn" was the band's start and there from NIGHTWISH only ran for success while the inspiration/innovation chapter seems to have closed. Sami Vanska (SYNERGY, TAROT) participated on "Oceanborn" as well and I guess the bass was much more present and clearer, which is a valid feature for the entire musical message, not like on this very album having so many en vogue atmospheric details that, after all, turn out to be boring. When I hear that German tops are "intoxicated" with NIGHTWISH... I realize I shall never have place for praising what can make money ignoring the creative side-which is, up to my opinion, the most important element as far as music is concerned. Well, it is a pity! Perhaps most of you disapprove my sayings... this is it! Only intended to suggest opening your eyes before buying this sample of Operatic Gothic Metal Rock. Surely, those who adore the sound of previous albums probably shall taste as well, this dose of NIGHTWISH. www.nightwish.com Rating: 0.81/1 (01.10)

NORDVARGR(SWE)-*"Awaken"* CD'02 (54. 41 min, 8 tracks) (CODE666/EIBON)

Weirdness at its highest degree!!! This sober atmosphere manages to even scare the hell of an angry pissed off listener... since the grave dark note of low tonalities discourages any left desire of positivism, optimism or even life! Thick's really sick mind (MZ.412) is the one who conceived this solo project and this is in the line of Industrial trend promoted by CMI label being at the same level with other Swedish bands that follow it. Roars, effects, choirs, intonations, desperate cries, a horror atmosphere of suspense and anxiety, fear, hopeless thoughts, death... what else can I say when listening to such tunes? "Seeds Of Blood" is a track of 15 minutes with an overwhelming strange aura specific to horror movies developing itself on mystical occult and bleak themes! I'd say this is a genuine spectacle of Black Ambient and I believe there is no way for this not to completely satisfy the curiosity of the darkest and most sinister minds! Absolutely Diabolic! Nevertheless, I think it is a little boring for more than two or three successive auditions, but this is definitely not the fragile face of the album... www.205recordings.com Rating: 0.80/1 (09.12)

NOTRE DAME(NOR)-*"Coming Soon To A Theatre Near You, The End"* CD'02 (45. 11 min, 11 tracks) (OSMOSE/ROCRIS DISC)

This very album was officially released in autumn 1998 and now completed with six bonus tracks, a remixed sound, a new design for Digipack and poster. I actually dislike insisting on re-made albums and that is why I only tell you that the theatrics universe created by NOTRE DAME is an incredible horror dramatic and apocalyptic one as the mixture of many metallic styles confers

a certain aura and colour to the sound. It is something addressed to CRADLE OF FILTH fans as well as to DEVIL DOLL disciples. I have problems in labelling the style of this project: Black, Gothic Atmospheric Metal? I suppose it is their appreciation to be made but I assure you it definitely is worth to listen to. Rating: 0.78/1 (13.03)

OBTEST(LIT)-*"Auka Seniems Dievam"* CD'01 (43. 52 min, 10 tracks) (LEDO TAKAS)

My colleague from "AD ARMA!" Magazine (ex-Ledo Takas) has decided to promote bands from his own country and thus I now carry in my hands an album of a Lithuanian band to which, although I try finding defects, I have nothing to reproach. The entire album develops a notable strength as the guitars' sound, although rather primitive or unprofessionally mixed, creates a traditional Slavonic medieval atmosphere, which is enjoyable for the ear. Moreover, the tracks are performed in English and Lithuanian as well, resembling rather to hymns due to a strong clear impressive voice. I find difficult to label the four's music into a certain style! Perhaps if trying I could say Slavonic Black Metal! It might be HELHEIM in a Slavonic resonance or a different SKYFORGER more classical and somehow clearer of so many modern instruments, effects and thus torments. And these are the most appropriate things to the OBTEST's visualization and manner of approaching music! www.obtest.lt Rating: 0.79/1 (07.02)

OCEANS OF SADNESS(BEL)-*"Laughing Tears, Crying Smile"* CD'02 (69. 20 min, 10 tracks) (THE LSP)

Quite a storm in a glass of water for a modest band featuring common sequences which were catchy a long-time ago... The mixture of Black, Gothic, Death Metal, Progressive and Atmospheric becomes rather annoying after the first three tracks, so does the bothering intrusive male voice since all abortive inflexions make the impression of an amateur. As for the rest: plentiful keyboard, drawn out guitars, simplistic battery... a kind of all kinds Metal addressed to everybody and still to none. A hotchpotch of styles indifferently and uninterestingly arranged... What is quite curious is the fact that the label promotes them in high forces... Why? I have no clue... www.oceansofsadness.com Rating: 0.68/1 (28.06)

ODROERIR(GER)-*"Last euch sagen aus alten Tagen"* CD'02 (40. 42 min, 8 tracks) (ARS METALLI)

It seems like the German label prefers rather Pagan Folk bands! This very case is an eloquent example since ODROERIR promotes a pleasant Pagan Folk Rock Metal for a first audition yet which, at a certain moment, gets rather boring. The truth is that the young musicians are able to introduce you an archaic simplistic world dominated by war and battle accents. The male baritone voice is strong while the female one has the gift of impressing as well as the sound of traditional instruments. Still, I cannot cope with the idea of mixing Metal with rock on a Pagan Folk territory as it only frames the sound and makes the audition at least difficult. I believe that if the Germans insisted on the Folk side, they would have finished a high quality

album. Since they haven't, it simply is just another album trying to copy the old band CRUACHAN yet spreading German messages. I find remarkable the lay-out of the booklet and the included photos as well as the main page of their site: www.odroerir-fix.de. Rating: 0.68/1 (23.02)

ON THORNS I LAY(GRE)-*"Angeldust"* CD'01 (38. 07 min, 8 tracks) (BLACK LOTUS)

Right after the failure experienced with their last album released at Holy Records, I thought that the Greeks gave up Metal for the sake of Disco music. I knew they graduated from Bucharest University but here from their history completely disappeared from my life. I guess this new material kind of took me by surprise since my expectations would have covered at best a danceable music. Ah, it is true, we are not far from this area either but it is better since Stefanos and Chris have come to better senses and a more Metal sound. Let's say this is a ballad-album presided over a commercial aura with melancholic nice tunes, a kind of what is PARADISE LOST now plus multiple female vocals, violins and all kind of male vocals from brutal to Pop possibilities. I wasn't bothered of this material and I think it is better than the former one but however this band's evolution embraced a sound away too distanced from my Metal tastes! It is as well a kind of THEATRE OF TRAGEDY but at a different scale! I believe their music turned now into an entertainment and not a serious one. How else could it be since this Atmospheric Metal oscillates between Gothic, Electro, Pop and slight shadows of Doom Metal with calm riffs, a monotonous simplistic and linear battery! Onthornsilay92@hotmail.com Rating: 0.78/1 (23.11)

PALE FOREST(NOR)-*"Exit Mould"* CD'01 (51. 56 min, 12 tracks) (LISTENABLE)

I have experienced quite a shock when finding out that this French label signed with a band out of Metal sphere or definition by far. If you wish for enjoying a combination of Kate Bush, Bjork, Tori Amos and THE GATHERING, then PALE FOREST represents the most appropriate choice. Kristin's voice featured on the first two albums of CREST OF DARKNESS as well as on the former albums of this very band, "Transformation Hymnes" and "Of Machines And Men". I must admit it is a very successful album as the Gothic Rock sound, with many Atmospheric and Pop notes, indeed creates a comfortable mood. The piano and the keyboard are simply the ideal instruments able to "communicate" with Kristin Fjellseth' calm-peaceful and warm voice. No doubt, "Exit Mould", by far, overpasses the last couple of THE GATHERING albums and those who prefer melodiousness and commercial sound can definitely, with no remorse, choose for PALE FOREST. Pale_forest@hotmail.com. Rating: 0.91/1 (03.03)

PANCHRYSLIA(BEL)-*"In Obscure Depths"* CD'02 (42. 19 min, 9 tracks) (THE LSP)

A lay out reminding me of "World of Worms", ZYKLON's album, a voice perfectly resembling with IMMORTAL, a Black Metal atmosphere in Norwegian style, lots of modern rhythms, melodiousness and fastness followed by Heavy riffs parts... this

should be the sound description of the debutant. All is copied after IMMORTAL, but I can admit in a very successfully manner as the four Belgians are really skilful. It didn't kill me but managed to be quite a cure of nonconformist Black Metal rather brutal and full of negative energies that actually interact with my inner ones having in the end as result a state of satisfying discharging. It is probably an album on the taste of all aggressive Black dependents which shall find appreciation among critics. It is an interesting name for Belgian scene and a debut that might have easily imposed if appeared 5-6 years ago. www.come.to/panchryslia Rating: 0.74/1 (27.06)

PAUL CHAIN(ITA)-*"Park Of Reason"* CD'02 (77. 00 min, 11 tracks) (BEYOND)

Here comes a damn sober and dark music!!! Paul is quite a veteran of Metal scene, already a cult character for Italy and not only, especially due to his activity performed in DEATH SS band. At the age of 40, the musician actually presents 11 complex tracks based on a profound Dark Doom Metal sound with deep roots in BLACK SABBATH, COUNT RAVEN or ST. VITUS. I really don't figure out what success might reach this music on a such pragmatic Metal scene but I find necessary to point it out and to recommend as well listening to this album. This band (practically a solo project even if from time to time there are some guest players invited) actually activates for 23 years now and has a rich discography. This very album features 90 minutes of music with a last track structured in two sequences mono of 15 minutes each. It is rather a too introverted and grave sound for my ears!!! www.quasarrecords.3000.it Rating: 0.78/1 (07.12)

PENITENT(NOR)-*"Songs Of Despair"* CD'02 (45. 14 min, 8 tracks) (BEYOND)

Impressive!!! This is an album I received almost a year and half ago but then it was in a CD-R version and I remember I did review it but it happens I don't find it. I have an announcement: for those who are used with PENITENT as an Ambient band... be aware, this album is a bomb! Why so? Because the sound based on a melancholic theatrical Dark Metal, oscillates between atmospheric Dark Wave and explosive Industrial. The album takes benefit of a superb voice (Bernt Sunde) guiding the entire atmosphere and a majestic keyboard bursting of melodiousness and expression. Since Karsten is a DEVIL DOLL fan, there are some notable frames reminding of Mr. Doctor both in musical concept and execution. This is the most avant-garde PENITENT album and perhaps the most Metal as well. It is a beauty and a stylistic delight! For PENITENT fans, this album is a real challenge while for the rest...it might be a little too experimental...www.neokunst.com/penitent Rating: 0.87/1 (08.11)

PENTAGRAM(USA)-*"Turn To Stone"* CD'02 (79. 02 min, 17 tracks) (PEACEVILLE)

These grandfathers of Doom Stone Metal come back in forth, once again, in mass-media attention, but this time with a collection of tracks released under Peaceville banner (there are tracks from their first three albums: "Relentless/Pentagram", "Day Of

Reckoning" and "Be Forewarned"). Although the Americans started to play three decades ago, their music still impresses but mostly the ones over the age of 40. I guess there is no point to speak more of this collection since the tracks belong to 1985-1994 period. Moreover, PENTAGRAM has already released, for this year, the last album at Relapse Records, entitled "First Daze Here" and this material is exclusively dedicated to ST. VITUS, CATHEDRAL, and BLACK SABBATH fans... what peaceful times... Rating: 0.78/1 (23.08)

PENUMBRA(FRA)-"The Last Bewitchment" CD'02 (45, 20 min, 9 tracks)

(SEASON OF MIST)

After the debut album, "Emanate", released at Serenades Records in 1999, PENUMBRA keeps going many gigs and from then, for a period of two years, nobody knows a thing of them until the moment Season Of Mist received a new demo which brought also a new contract. The band massively changes the line-up having now 8 members of which 2 represents female voices, one male voice, an oboe performer, keyboard player and, of course, the rest of Metal instrumentals. Towards the previous album, PENUMBRA emphatically develops the classical feature as the symphonic note smoothly embraces Metal tunes though Gothic forms are the ones that outweigh. Here from it starts the new sound rather pretty complex but not original at all. It is a replica to THERION in a French version, well executed and very catching on the stage! The female voices bring a choral note to the entire sound while the mixture of Metal and Classic is often interrupted by an aggressive angry male voice Gothic Black Metal bands like. It is just modern melodious orchestral Metal with symphonic entertaining rhythms. A coquettish album that evidently reveals the musicians' enthusiasm but still in lack of "that" something... Rating: 0.81/1 (14.06)

PENUMBRA (UK) - "Skandinavien" CD'02 (74, 00 min, 6 tracks) (IRIS LIGHT)

If APHELION might have entered a commercial zone, even if in a trivial percentage, well, this project definitely killed all my words I ever had. It might be a kind of introverted Electronic Dark Ambient in addition of ambiguous ingredients. Because my knowledge and experience are limited in commenting such sonorities, I better end here with one single remark: PENUMBRA is a project belonging to a Zoviet*France member-a old Electronic band. Rating: 0.55/1 (01.11)

PRIMORDIAL(IRE)-"Storm Before Calm" CD'02 (46, 22 min, 7 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)

I do admit I anxiously waited for this new material to come! After "Spirit The Earth Aflame"...I thought that Nemtheanga's Celtic passion would disappear from the musical sphere as the album is rather experimental than Metal while the Folk influences practically dominate the entire sound! I really wanted to know if PRIMORDIAL

faded away or not! Well, I can assure you this Irish quintet has returned with a material just perfect for non-conventional Black Metal fans' "digestion"! There is a professional sound; the seven sequences are recorded in Academy Studios beside Mags (MY DYING BRIDE). The epic facet is rather more pronounced than on "Journeys End", the melancholic one reaches from time to time the MCD." The Burning Season" atmosphere and Black Metal-old version seems to shape itself inside some aggressive passages, reminding me of "Imrama". From another point of view, the new album follows the former one's structure but much more assorted and complex as the voice's inflexions impregnate a personal imprint to the whole sound. It is not about a new music, a certain direction or something out of imagination...but solely PRIMORDIAL, a name which imposes respect because of age and artistic quality attested during past years. Inside such abundance of Black Metal bands, at the beginning of this millennium, Ireland vividly continues to be represented by these five Celtic a n c e s t o r s . www.hammerheart.com/primordial. Rating: 0.92/1 (13.06)



PSICORRAGIA (MEX)-"La Pasion de Lo Mortal" CD'01 (43, 15 min, 8 tracks) (AMERICAN LINE)

Coming exactly from Mexico, this band wishes to promote classical Doom Death Metal but in a version partially original as regional influences leave their marks on this band's tunes. We can hear guitars' solos, a throaty screamed depressive voice from time to time interrupted by a simple female one, violin, keyboard and all kind of traditional instruments... otherwise just the usual metal contour. The sound reminds me of the first TRISTITIA album but I think that the aggressiveness of the voice breaks through that peculiar atmosphere and depression or sadness are now differently outlined... paler yet still present. Let us be indulgent with this debut and hope for the future to bring their own inspiration into the musical orientation they have chosen.

psicorragia@hotmail.com Rating: 0.78/1 (03.04)

PUNGENT STENCH (AUT)-"Masters Of Mortal Servants Of Sin" CD'01 (47, 14 min, 10 tracks)

(NUCLEAR BLAST/ROCRIS DISC)

Such glorious feeling to listen to the music that once used to break ears! Martin Shirenc & Co. comes in forth, after years and years, with a new material just when everybody thought the band died. Fine aspects: a fresh fast sound, sudden impulsive Death Metal riffs, a powerful voice, expressive drums... and that should be all. Bad points: a monotonous common sound, resembling repetitive tracks, aged ideas. In other perspectives, the music can easily be confounded with the band's designation, which is an atmosphere that "stinks to high heaven". Rating: 0.62/1 (21.01)

PURULENCE URETRE (ROM)-"Necrofil" MCD-R'02 (07, 03 min, 5 tracks)

(AXA VALAHA)

Uhhhhhhhhhh!

Malicious denomination and ugly titles for the tracks! Robert, Claudiu and Hannibal perform on this album five EXTREME, Death Grind ultra brutal and ultra

PUTREFACTION(ROM)-"Descending Purity" demo MCD'02 (15, 53 min, 5 tracks)

This is INDIAN FALL in Death Metal version! It is, if you prefer, the brutal project belonging to members of Brasov's band while Andrei Calmuc is the one who performs at guitar, bass, keys, drums programming and voice besides Cristian Opinca and Adrian Vitnescu guitar players. I don't understand why was it desired for this band existence to be continued under certain conditions of which even in Romania death Metal ceased to be a fashion any more! Perhaps Andrei's "aggressive" side required an expressing action and also a status of not ending an activity started some time ago. PUTREFACTION insists on that traditional Death Metal, with throaty angry voice, guitars in GORGUTS or CANNIBAL CORPSE manner seldom interrupted by a modern keyboard and processing's with a pale tendency to Black Metal. I am sure that, a few years ago, PUTREFACTION could have gained a special interest with this demo since, not taking in account that the sound has not a reasonable shade of originality, well, the compositions and performance are indeed to be praised. Unfortunately, I cannot affirm this

product touched me, although a first audition was really satisfying. There is too much of classical Death Metal for this scene. Another good point is the recording quality if we only take notice is just a demo. But I must admit this material might be a potential pleasant surprise for this extreme Metallic supporters! www.putrefaction.go.ro Rating: 0.79/1 (17.07)

RAIN FELL WITHIN (USA)-"Refuge" CD'02 (57, 38 min, 10 tracks)

(DARK SYMPHONIES)

Right after the cheered "Believe", the Americans come back with new tracks in Gothic Metal manner, with Atmospheric and Doom shades and, only now I notice, some Power Metal touches. It doesn't sound bad at all; the female voice is warm and hospitable as well but I am afraid I cannot speak about any trace of sound evolution. It basically is a sequel of the precedent album, pretty fade and in lack of other appealing elements that might be worth to be noted. It is just that, besides Dawn's voice, another one could be heard on the last track, "Passing Time". There is an intriguing cover and design of the lay-out. It is possible for the fans of peaceful Metal music to be enchanted by "Refuge"... I myself felt no thrilling emotions and I am afraid that because of missing force or musical expressiveness (and you can read between lines: no new ideas and linear interpretation), RAIN FELL WITHIN soon is about to become history! www.rainfellwithin.com Rating: 0.75/1 (30.03)

RAPTURE(FIN)-"Songs For Withering" CD'02 (45, 35 min, 9 tracks)

(SPIKEFARM)

The list of albums I so much desired to listen to but actually turned out to be a disappointment has been extended

with this one! I guess I miss Depressive Metal but I refer to the grey one with heart-rending passages, not the Gothic Rock one with melodic rhythms and danceable tunes. If we take a look from fashion's perspective, I could say RAPTURE features a fresh vibrant sound moulded on a profile of two male powerful different voices that actually lead the entire instrumentation. All that Metallic depressive mystery featured on the debut "Futile" has become an extroverted sound oscillating between warmth and iciness, yet full of highlighted and melodic parts while Death Metal places behind melancholic Rock. It is a close-knit album with a mature sound, Heavy guitars and tedious battery and Peri's voice contrasts the new one's, Henri (DIABLERIE). I also understood there was a change at the guitars' section; so, we can speak about a new line-up. I suppose the new direction approached grants the listener with an ambiguous mood, especially if still lives the nostalgia of dark sound the debut featured...and I am afraid that the 9 tracks shall be a catalytic agent for a very different category of fans: of melodic Metal full of commercial shades and pretty tasty for a live performance. Yet...why complaining, this is the new trend and it seems it is also the new sound coming from Finnish Metal bands... www.rapture.tk Rating: 0.78/1 (01.10)

RAVENTHRONE (AUT)- "Endless Conflict Theorem" CD'02 (46. 50 min, 11 tracks)
(AVANTGARDE)

Ray Wells might be familiar for some due to his famous project, PAZUZU. It seems like moving in Canada changed his musical vision so that the ruins of Dark Metal hardly can be noticed inside the new tunes. His debut with this new project, "Malice In Wonderland", pleasantly surprised me but it has been a while since that time and RAVENTHRONE name was rather forgotten. Moreover, since last PAZUZU material was quite a disappointment, I guess no one really expected more from this veteran of Austrian Black Metal scene. Finally, Ray's friendship with Martin Shirenc (PUNGENT STENCH, HOLLENTON) conducts to this very new RAVENTHRONE album, sensibly sheltered by the same Epic Folk Metal dimension. Any further... it is pretty hard to characterize since the sound is so diversified that it actually is difficult to settle if it is deception or originality... I tend to think the first part is the true one taking in account I quite used to admire Ray's music. What you are supposed to listen to oscillates between exuberant Gothic Metal (in CREMATORY manner) and extreme Black Metal full of epic passages, miscellaneous inflexions of the voice (clear and violent), some choral effects, Rock drums, heavy but very melancholic tunes, a paler keyboard while the straight supremacy belongs now to the harmony of guitars. The recording is pretty elegant and the opposition calm-aggressive fascinates and confuses as well. Perhaps is an album with too many ideas featuring many musical styles... so that, in the end, I have no ideas whom are going to be pleased... www.malicegarden.com Rating: 0.78/1 (27.06)

RED HARVEST (NOR)- "Sick Transit Gloria Mundi" CD'02 (45. 12 min, 11 tracks)

(NOCTURNAL ART)

Apocalyptic Industrial Paranoia Metal is the definition The Norwegians themselves preferred for their last work! I find difficult to describe such music if taking in account that the inhuman voices mixed with short circuited keyboard and Power tunes simply throw you into a SF universe... so darkened and full of oomph... The strength these tracks emit is by far malefic for the dreamer who yearns for melodiousness yet benefic for all fans of extreme obscurities. A new album, I believe the sixth that is complete and the ninth in the band's history as dynamic and aggressive as the others. The rest of details can be found at www.redharvest.com. Rating: 0.80/1 (03.04)

REQUIEM (POR)- "Requiem Aeternam Dona Eis" demo CD'01 (26. 07 min, 5 tracks)

Any attempt needs and requires appreciation! But this goes for a promising issue. If it sounds bad, well, there is alternative: either give up or rehearse day after day until reaching a reasonable level! I'd say these Portuguese didn't hear of such and, despite the professional look of the CD, they build up a lamentable music, risky to be praised and easy to be criticized. The mixing part is not of quality and finally the music becomes annoying to be re-listened to. On a Melodic Doom/Death Metal structure, REQUIEM leaves place to different other shades like Progressive, Gothic, Rock or Heavy Metal, with aggressive male voices and a pathetic female one. Not much of a surprise, the result is pessimistic, a mixture of styles, in lack of a coherent structure, a lousy interpretation and a mediocre melodic line. It is such a pity for the waste with such an interesting logo and a video presentation included on CD! www.requiem.web.pt Rating: 0.68/1 (23.10)

ROOM WITH A VIEW (ITA)- "First Year Departure" CD'02 (55. 22 min, 9 tracks)
(MY KINGDOM MUSIC)

Elegant Gothic for a decadence age... Isolationist and theatrical Art... what a characterization and definition... not to mention the attitude!!! There is a true avant-garde tent! Trumpet, violin, tambourine, classical guitar, and acoustic parts... everything is built on a rhythmic and theatrical Gothic Dark Pop framework with roots in modern New Wave. If you like, it is a replica to BEYOND DAWN, but in a more plastically expressed version, a knotty one. Francesco Grass' mature voice appoints a melancholic aura with plentiful superb inflexions while Francesco Lonetti's bass outlines the gravity of Italian music. From time to time avant-garde riffs of Alessandro Mita's guitar's or Fabio Cappabianca's straight drum intercessions... simply complete such grave atmosphere. The sound's roots are multiple and I can even say it mostly is a European music of which essence focuses on specific traditional elements uniquely combined within the nine tracks. Therefore, this is a very damn' different albums from all I've lately listened to and I have the feeling that we're talking about a certain mirage impossible to be framed or spoken about inside these lines... maybe between the lines... This is a music of low drinking-house... pub or nightclub...decadence, art and mystery! I end this review revealing some details: the band was founded

back in 1999 under the name of BLACK THORNS LODGE and it was the promo released in 2000 that brought them a contract with this young label. www.clubepoque.cjb.net Rating: 0.80/1 (23.11)

RUNES ORDER (ITA)- "The Art Of Scare And Sorrow" CD'02 (61. 54 min, 14 tracks)
(BEYOND)

I believe this very project is one of the oldest in Italy in Dark Wave/Industrial field. If "Winter" or "Odisseum" were not enough advertised, "Waiting Forever" received a warm welcome on the Ambient market so that RUNES ORDER became an emblematic name for the entire Italian scene. The new tracks were composed in the light of impressions Claudio Dondo and Tony Tears (HELDEN RUNE) experienced after watching "The House With Windows that Laugh" motion picture and the complete album is inspired from the movie's sequences. If, on the previous album Diego Merzelleto/FROZEN AUTUMN performed the voice, for this one, the two musicians asked for Argento's apocalyptic voice/ ANTROPOFAGUS/SPITE EXTREME WING and from time to time... there can be also distinguished few echoes of female voice. As for the rest... industrial solos in CMI style, waves and effects specific to horror movies' atmosphere (Goblin, Frizzi, Simonetti)... shadows, darkness... a real Dark Ambient Industrial chaos... It is recommended solely to those who prefer sophisticated Ambient with cosmic elements (K.SHULZE). I guess it is even more terrifying and depressing than "Waiting Forever", appreciation completely validated and outlined by the album's title itself! www.masterpiecedistribution.com Rating: 0.80/1 (17.08)

SALEM (ISR)- "Spread The Germs" CD'02 (48. 30 min, 12 tracks)
(KMG MUSIC)

One of the oldest Death Metal bands (founded in 1985!!!) returns with a new specific album! A grim voice, heavy guitars, ravishing blasting battery seems to be the prevailing elements for SALEM sound. In order to confirm that Israeli's universe is not limited, they use melodic voices, female ones as well, oriental shades (afro-Cubans percussions and Arabian elements), traditional parts and lyrics of all kinds including psalmic ones. I might say it doesn't sound bad at all!!! For a Death Metal fan "Collective Demise" could be an illustration of extreme virtuosity and it would definitely not be a regretful choice. For me... it is just another Death Metal album in lack of originality as my only admiration goes for their strength to revisit Metal scene. If "Kaddish" or "A Moment Of Silence" were appreciated albums and the Metallic publications showed such..., well, this didn't go for the lyrics as well. Israeli parliamentarians quite reacted to their anti-Israel messages and the track "Ha'ayara Bo'eret" (the town is on fire) practically reached a real conflict situation next to holocaust issue. <http://all.at/salem> Rating: 0.79/1 (07.10)

SALTATIO MORTIS (GER)- "Das Zweite Gesicht" CD'02 (46. 07 min, 12 tracks)
(NAPALM)

"Dance Of The Death" is the signification of this recently super mediated project. The fact is that lyrics are in German, which makes the sense

for the entire German mass media not to cease praising the album. There might be truth between the lines but with one single road: for the inspiration of mixing Medieval with Punk and with Epic Metal as well...into a modern electronic aura. In other words, outlines of old medieval music with sounds of bagpipe and other traditional instruments having actually embraced a modern full of energy shape due to electronic rhythms with diverse voices and Rock tunes! From a different perspective, I may say Punk is really the reason and motivation for this band to sound like this and, unfortunately this is not the kind of atmosphere I prefer. In fact, the whole SALTATIO MORTIS message is completely different from those coming from metal bands, even if the theme is sometimes common and for this case is "The Contest With Death". The seven musicians prove to have evident abilities in handling all musical instruments and it is very possible for their music to be a quality one. I am not in the position to be sure and neither much interested in! I have listened to the album for couple of times and I didn't dislike it, in fact, I believe I might even listen to it once again and to be more precise, every time I could intend to offer my guests an aerobic incursion... Well, the CD's booklet is extraordinary and indeed the complete production of the album attests high class. I don't believe I convinced you but neither did I estrange you from SALTATIO MORTIS. You are to cover by yourselves the road all the way through their music and once you opened the doors... who knows if you find yourselves among fans of this new style, which is Medieval/Punk/Rock. I myself have doubts I would... but who can really tell? www.saltatio-mortis.com Rating: 0.77/1 (17.08)

SATARIAL (RUS)- "Heidenlarm" CD'02 (43. 04 min, 11 tracks)
(MASTERPIECE)

A long time for this second album to be released... The oldest Russian Black Metal band, founded in 1989, manages to bring 11 tracks, five years after the exceptional "Quenn Of The Elves Land", in 1997! I suppose I should have expected to have found enclosed in the booklet another pictures with naked women, various Satanist accessories and some zestful effects for band's live version. Lord Seth's obsession next to anti-Christianity is materialized as well in lyrics yet the whole album is just a tribute to Dark divinity. How does it sound? Well, there is nothing new since the last one... the amalgam of Black Pagan Metal and Folk Epic has the power in sound, there are flute, a simple female voice, violin and all Metallic garnishes. Unfortunately, Lord Seth followed no evolution at all regarding the sound or the musical concept. I think this second album could be interesting solely as an echo of the former one and not for its tracks... and perhaps for the erotic/obscene facet! Sad but true... who knows? If the album was released one year after the first, the effect might have been different! Anyway, the 11 tracks are, in fact, a lousy common combination of traditional passages (old ballads) and extreme Metal elements while the resemblance between each other strikes so that you come to think that the album appeared only for the sake of being not because there was a reason at all! For those who haven't listened so far to Black Metal Folk/Medieval orientated bands... SATARIAL might

be an appropriate choice... for the rest, who look for innovative Metal I guess it would be better to pay attention to something else. impaler@cityline.it Rating: 0.79/1 (17.08)

SATARIEL (SWE)-"Phobos and Deimos" CD'02 (51.01 min, 11 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)
Such hard times this band had to face!!! After a failure with Impure Creations Records the Swedish released their debut "Lady Lust Lilith" at Pulverised Records. Then, they sustained plenty of gigs and finally signed for Hammerheart. The ex-members of THE MOANING, DAWN ODF DARKNESS, BELSEMAR or NECROMICON have invited now Messiah Marcolin (CANDLEMASS, MEMENTO MORI) so that the three tracks he also performs in are quite fantastic. The rest is just Death Metal in a melodic version, based on the contrast melodiousness/aggressiveness, some Doom parts and a lot of keyboard. If Messiah were not invited, most certainly, the album would have passed as unobserved. In this case, I believe there shall follow regards and regards... for quite some time, even if SATARIEL's musical and conceptual structure has nothing else outstanding in comparison with other bands of Swedish extreme Metal school. Rating: 0.73/1 (23.02)

SCALPLOCK (UK)-"Spread The Germs" CD'02 (33.08 min, 28 tracks) (CACOPHONOUS)
Incredible...! The label that many years ago used to promote nameless bands for that time such as DIMMU BORGIR, CRADLE OF FILTH, BALSAGOTH or GEHENNA has returned on Metal scene! Even if what these British musicians perform is not exactly on my taste, I must admit all 28 explosive tracks really managed to get my attention. I guess I said in times before, I don't actually sympathise with Grindcore and neither with Punk/Death Metal but I "translate" the musicians' message as a protest against expansionism and the new (???)USA and Israel's politics, which are quite favourite subjects for such kind of music. Well, it definitely cannot be described as music... but naked Grindcore or is it better to say SICKNESS? Definitely it is a torment for the fans! I guess I better keep my mouth shut since I cannot precisely make an idea of what this music means... ohhhhhh, such ferocity...!!! We wait for listening to the other two bands that signed with Cacophonous, UNSANCTUM and ROSWELL. www.cacophonous.com Rating: 0.72/1 (02.10)

SCHOLOMANCE (USA)-"The Immortality Murder" DCD'02 (110.04 min, 20 tracks) (THE END)
Regarding their first album, I remember I wrote about almost two years ago and thus I really was curious to listen to their new composition. It seems like it is worth the waiting although their controlled chaos fatigues from the very beginning. I thought I travelled back long time ago and listened to NOCTURNUS, a band that opened for me new horizons due to its first two albums. This album has two CDs, both of them very complex and elaborated but featuring voices only on the first. In other words, the second one completes a small acoustic opera, based on a classical music structure, which is desired to be an "exotic" bonus for all

who buy this CD. Back to the first one, I believe that Orchestrated Progressive Dark Metal might be the description of their style although the multiple rhythms' changes definitely extend the cataloguing to Heavy, Black or even Death Metal. It sounds pretty good but I must have been too tired of sounds that tangle even my own breath. The most important thing is that you should be aware of these musicians' high value in interpretation, especially taking in account the fact it is so hard to get synchronized with such tunes. I assume that the highest quotation goes for their perfect interpretation! Rating: 0.72/1 (22.02)

SEAR BLISS (HUN)-"Grand Destiny" CD'02 (46.37 min, 10 tracks) (RED STREAM)
The fourth album of these Hungarians was released at an autochthon label, last year, but Red Stream insisted for the album to appear as well under their hallmark...therefore, in a dissimilar imagery, SEAR BLISS presents now the best tracks of that album. I have written all about it "Kogaionon" no. 7 which means I see no use to repeat myself. I may only say that the 10 tracks follows the atmospheric Black Metal line, with trumpet, trombone and baritone, an aggressive throaty (rather too linear) voice, melodic parts, even melancholic ones, fast guitars and a more restrained synth than on former albums... SEAR BLISS is focused now on a sound rather Metallic than a sumptuous grandiloquent one and the traditional elements (Robert Pinter is back with his trumpet!) basically bestow inventiveness to the sound. www.searbliss.hu Rating: 0.79/1 (03.07).

SEAR BLISS (HUN)-"Forsaken Symphony" CD'02 (63.22 min, 9 tracks) (RED STREAM)
This is an interesting and, in the same time, linear album! I have no idea why Andras Nagy prefers to leave the voice unmixed as it really bothers in such shape! The label pretends that this is the band's sound but I keep my opinion that Black Metal can be listened to in a more elaborated profile (of voices and guitars) as well! It is like a ceaseless noise interweaving a bombastic keyboard and a resonant trombone... If seen from a different perspective, I could say that the new parts remind me of the superb debut, "Phantoms", full of atmosphere and amazing rhythms! This Hungarian Black Metal approach is successful as well, outlined by a trombone/baritone placed inside melodic passages, extremely aggressive guitars with primitive riffs, a constant battery and a demonic voice definitely pissed off by this life! I cannot distinguish much of a difference from the former material but nevertheless is better than the other two. I guess it is a pleasant surprise that, although has not the proper strength of a reputable album, manages to awake the nostalgia of that time right after the demo "The Pagan Winter" was released. News might be that the other founder member, the guitar player- Csaba Csejtei has returned to the band. Rating: 0.80/1 (21.10)

SECOND LASS (ITA)-"Try To Paint A Fitful Love..." CD'02 (50.26 min, 12 tracks) (WATCH ME FALL)
I do acknowledge the label's description made me more than curious: HIM, TIAMAT, TO DIE FOR,

DURAN DURAN! Now, since I have listened to the album, I can tell with no doubts that these talented musicians' debut has certain roots in '70-'80's fashion, starting with PINK FLOYD to DAVID BOWIE or even DEPECHE MODE. I cannot brand the sound of these five Italians because the scale is rather too assorted, from Rock, Pop or Electronic/Psychedelic till Gothic Metal or Dark Wave. Each track has its own story; there is no connection between them as the tunes are extremely different and manifold. It all starts with Orson Wells' voice, recorded during '30's, suggesting a simulation of alien invasion... Then, SECOND LASS opens Gothic Rock surprises series with a track in which the male voice takes over the whole sound while the tunes' echoes turned me back almost 20 years ago when, in order to put your hands on a magnetic tape with a DURAN DURAN or David Bowie albums, certain sacrifices and compromises were required. Anyway, by that time, musical information used to be so limited that almost any guitar or some lyrics in a foreign language instantly created a state of inner liberation, at least inside Eastern Europe. I do confess, this album pleasantly surprised me even though there are not valences of musical skilfulness to be noticed... but rhythmical and melodious aspects still are to be mentioned as two fundamental elements with which SECOND LASS can proudly stand. There is also another piece to point out: Psychedelic feature but its exploitation is rather too pale as solely the last two tracks insist on this inaccessible dimension. All in all, I do advice you to taste this opus in 12 acts as it really worth! www.secondlass.com Rating: 0.88/1 (17.08)

SECRETS OF THE MOON (GER)-"Stronghold Of The Inviolables" CD'02 (30.43 min, 7 tracks) (RED STREAM)
Another old German underground band succeeds now to release products under Red Stream label's mark. The ex MARTYRIUM members have chosen the path of DARK THRONE and CELTIC FROST so that their Black Metal is an old brutal one having none of modern affinities. It doesn't sound bad, still, as well as in KRJEG case, I am not interested in the activity of such bands! We entered the Third Millennium and, if there are some debutant bands ready to promote the line of old colossus, I suppose it is good, but it's not touching me. I guessed I faced too many clones lately and those elitist demagogic messages, coming from True Black Metal scene, are making the situation even worse for me since I do find hilarious such attitude. I believe that the Red Stream initiative is one to be appreciated yet why barely now? Those who think we can return to what once was...are definitely mistaken! Except if they desire to lie themselves in picturing everything through another point of view, an artificial one. Raw Black Metal was in deed a trend that changed the whole Death scene but let us pay respect to the ancestors of this very style while the other may try to prove <http://come.to/secretsofthemoon>! Rating: 0.68/1 (24.02)

SEIRIM (GER)-"Kill.War.Chaos" CD'02 (45.12 min, 11 tracks) (CUDGEL)
Oahhh! GORGUTS in a German version! The ex-DECOMPOSITION's

return with their second album, after "Empire Of The Dead" in 1999, a respected and well reviewed album in musical mass media. Although new Death Metal attracts me no more, the Germans' sound reminds me of glorious times of this style, with extremely fast battery mixed "forward" the guitars and a violent nervous and ugly voice! What I listened here rather resembles with American Death Metal and those 45 minutes spent in SEIRIM's company created me a pleasant mood well connected to the past and not to the future. It is good but not enough for the Third Millennium! www.seirim.de Rating: 0.77/1 (03.04)

SERENADE (UK)-"The Serpents Dance" CD'02 (35.59 min, 8 tracks) (GOLDEN LAKE)
Fraser managed, over the years, to keep this project alive and to release a new album in February 2002. I couldn't say if it is much better than the former ones but there is a certain seriousness to be spoken about when referring to this very product. I'd say the SERENADES journey onto atmospheric Death Metal universe goes on having Raynor Coss (MITHRAS) as vocal and trespassing through valleys of progressive and Doom shades with a fresh and pleasing sound. It is just a conservative simple and cursive Doom Death Metal. The eight tracks are rather short and that is why the album surely looks like a MCD but I believe the buyer can handle such <http://musicfans.to/goldenlake> Rating: 0.80/1 (23.10)

SERENADES (ITA)-"Ionia" CD'01 (36.32 min, 8 tracks) (ELEGY)
It is possible for some to find as a pleasant event listening to every Gothic Metal band, no matter which. For me, this band represents nothing although the mixture of de Gothic, Doom and Wave should uncover an attracting atmosphere. The clear voice, in THE CURE style, is here and there annoying; guitars are rather too melodious with an extremely commercial rhythm, the battery exasperates the listener with its puerile riffs while the keyboard is boring. All of you that still like CEMETARY... SERENADES might become a satisfactory musical version. I started to feel tired listening to less original albums that are not even able to expose some, very few, but some new elements, positive ones of which I could write about! Rating: 0.62/1 (17.03)

SETH (FRA)-"Divine-X" CD'02 (37.02 min, 8 tracks) (OSMOSE/ROCRIS DISC)
The French band enjoyed a great success right from the beginning but signing with OSMOSE actually made them famous all over the world. Unfortunately, the second album was a mediocre one and the style they approached became rather common. The new compositions seem to overpass the line of the precedent album although neither these can reach the value of the first one. As far as the musical concept is regarded, SETH combines brutal parts with the atmospheric and even electronic ones; a variety of voices sound good and the Heavy guitars follow better scores. It is a modern Black Metal with progressive and experimental valences more carefully conceived and interpreted so that the entire sound is a professional one rather attractive for those who prefer sophisticated Black Metal. On the other hand it is an album that

deserves much more attention when listening to it. Rating: 0.79/1 (13.03)

SEVERE TORTURE(HOL)-
"Misanthropic Carnage" CD'02 (32.24 min, 9 tracks)
(HAMMERHEART)
Velocity and synchronism! The Dutchmen are pretty familiar with the art of virtuosity so that what they perform is of first class! Plenty of energy and dynamics, frenzy... and this should be all. For a Death Metal fan this album could gain the title of the best of 2002. For me... it is just an additional brutal one. Does the orientation matter? Does the originality either? I have no idea... but it seems like these two weren't exactly what SEVERE TORTURE had in sketches. Pretty bad! Rating: 0.77/1 (29.10)

SHAPE OF DESPAIR (FIN)-"Angels Of Distress" CD'01 (54.51 min, 5 tracks)
(SPIKEFARM/SPINEFARM)
Let us see what we've got right here: long guitar solo, bombastic keyboards, depressed, sad and from time to time ultra-deep growls male voice, an enchanting and fragile female voice, a rather glacial atmosphere where no hope can possibly live... a frozen picture that throws your mind into a Finnish winter realm. ESOTERIC meets SKEPTICISM, which means Slow Majestic Funeral Doom Metal!!! In comparison with previous one "Shades Of...", the band has now a new formula featuring Pasi Koskinen (AMORPHIS) as vocal and Toni Raehalme at violin. The whole depressive aura sets forth a specific note to the album, not so transcendental and even more accessible than the earlier one yet in the same horrific atmosphere. Although the band has changed the line up, EXRAVEN carries on the same contour it has begun six years ago, also indulgently monotonous but now even insipid an exciting after a few more auditions. If we were to put together the two albums, one could find differences in sound and concept as well, a little clearer and more professional during the last tone, but without major distinctive alteration inside the inner direction. I find quite worrying and dreadful if not the gravest thing, I mean, is there any shade of evolution? I do not perceive as an inspiring fact to embrace conservatism in such music if being aware there are a lot of Finnish band already following the same melodic line. I should say that it is a step forward as far as the biography is concerned and stagnation for the concept dynamic of the sixth musicians. It is qualified for one audition, maybe two... but after that you have no alternative but changing the CD. If up to me, I desire for something else but slow tracks, extremely long, all kindred and inanimate. I do think there is an explanation for performing such boring sound: the album was conceived between 1997-1999, which is pretty long time ago. The proper term to define today those Finnish musical concepts should rather be "anachronic"! That is a sad fact as well as their music itself! Wake up, dear colleagues, we have already entered the third millennium! A strong point to defend the Finnish consists in Digipack exquisite design. Rating: 0.79/1 (2001)

SHINING (SWE)-"Angst - Sjalvdestruktivitets Emissaire" CD'02 (47.36 min, 6 tracks)
(AVANTGARDE)

Well, I finally am enthusiast (still!) about an old style Black Metal album! I didn't expect for such to be possible any more. But it is and I really quite enjoyed it. Having deep roots in BURZUM and DARK THRONE, SHINING released the third album in the same manner as the others, which are a Depressive and Suicidal Black Metal! Let's say: a lent rhythm, a shy battery (I have a feeling that Hellhammer quite had a relaxing job!) and the project's leader, Niklas Kvarforth, does all it is in his power to prove that Black Metal, Nordic version, in lack of modern atmospheric tortures can still make an impression! With a grim tortured voice, SHINING insists on the darken side; having long tracks rather resembling one with the other, both in execution and shape. If I am not wrong, this Swedish Black Metal project is in best shape ever as far as last years Swedish metal activity was regarded and I believe there is no chance for this album not to penetrate and strike the segment of conservative listeners who still are hungry for extreme measures. There are some pathways that remind me of first two HADES' albums on a BATHORY background! This mid-tempo murders any possible mood of restraint and although the album is abundant in aggressiveness... there is in sound certain melancholia and impressive sadness! I repeat myself, but I must say this is a surprise, a very good album with an approach not at all original but intelligently executed! I guess I should mention about an instrumental track composed by Alexander Purkis that has nothing to share with Metal... as it is just a sound of medieval clavier whose tunes follow a grave theatrical tone reminding of classical music. Rating: 0.89/1 (09.10)

SHIP OF FOOLS(UK)-"Let's Get This Mother Outta Here" CD'02 (64.54 min, 9 tracks)
(PEACEVILLE)
This is quite a surprise and a travel back in time! SHIP OF FOOLS is one of the most avant-garde bands I ever listened to so far and "Out There Somewhere" is a remarkable album, for sure! Of course, neither the previous one, "Close Your Eyes Forget The World", was less than this, but when I think about how much time has passed by since their debut... almost ten years, I come to realize how quickly I'm getting older!!! I remember I used to listen to this band by the time MY DYING BRIDE or ANATHEMA fought for supremacy against PARADISE LOST! All my friends kept wondering what I found so divine in SHIP OF FOOLS when Doom/Death Metal owned the power... Neither today I couldn't define what I like best at this band. Their musical orientation was supposed to be compared with GGFH or KONG and the fact a label like Dreamtime actually promoted such bands is absolutely something to be praised! Unfortunately, the two albums this band released in 1993 and 1994 were actually the only ones as the band split two years after. I don't know if it is in my power to characterize such sound but I can assure you, by far and by heart reasons, this CD is a brilliant one! The eclectic mixture of Ethereal with EBM, Industrial, Noise effects and Alternative/Progressive sketches out a stunning music, with an alluring keyboard full of acoustic passages, a battery able to create a danceable-waltz rhythm fulfilled with staccato interludes... as in the end... all is absolutely astonishing! "From Time" is

definitely the most elaborated and imposing track so that the whole 15 minute turn out to be the most wonderful journey into a multidimensional universe in lack of any known guiding marks. It is absolutely different from what you are used to listen to for these days... just a smooth travel into a fascinating realm defective of stylistic adjectives... This very CD presents the best nine tracks featured in both albums and you shouldn't miss listening to it! There are no vocals (just a few talking parts and whispers on a background of some tracks), no common rhythm, no classical style... just SHIP OF FOOLS! In order to complete such material, the label offers as well a video-clip of the track "L=SD2"... therefore, this is an exquisite CD no collector should miss! If Les Smith name sounds familiar next to bands like ANATHEMA or CRADLE OF FILTH, I remind you or announce you-for those who knew not-that SHIP OF FOOLS was his musical project in which performed as well Andy Banks, Sputnik, Damien Clarke or Mick Reed. If I was convincing... this is good news! If you enjoy this material, it means we speak the same language! Rating: 0.96/1 (21.10)

SIEBENBURGEN (SWE)-"Plagued Be Thy Angel" CD'01 (61.26 min, 13 tracks)
(NAPALM)
After releasing two demos and three albums, the Swedish get themselves in shape with new tracks structured in a fresh album, which was desired to be the best. Unfortunately, inspiration is exactly what Marcus Ehlin misses although the voice doesn't sound so bad. Yet let us succinctly see what we have got here: Heavy rhythms while guitars and drums are the instruments that can be more clearly heard and the female voice modestly yet not harmoniously interferes in the chorus. It is an album that gives the sensation of haste and unprofessional mixing with a very empty anachronistic sound. There is nothing modern and neither old style. It simply reminds me from time to time of older ROTTING CHRIST but that should be all. If "Loreia" or "Grimjaur" were quite intriguing albums, "Delictum" announces SIEBENBURGEN's twilight. This very sound definitely disappoints and I don't think there would be many devotees of Gothic-Black Metal style ready to appreciate such album! Rating: 0.61/1 (31.01)

SIGNS OF DARKNESS (BEL)-"Beyond The Autumn Leaves" CD'01 (45.27 min, 9 tracks)
(THE LSP)
This is another new entry that imitates modern melodious atmospheric Black Metal! In different words, a hoarse and very modest voice, from time to time a female one, shy and fade as well, pleasant keyboard, simple tunes conducted by metallic guitars, a linear battery and this is it. Keyboard solely is an element that distinguishes from the whole sound otherwise the album would have passed unnoticed. You can try on your own this album, yet I am sure you cannot find anything new but 45 minutes of fashionable Black Metal. signsofdarkness@hotmail.com. Rating: 0.71/1 (17.03)

SIRENIA (NOR)-"At Sixes And Sevens" CD'02 (54.00 min, 9 tracks)
(NAPALM)
I sometimes find myself in quite an ambiguous situation, dilemma, if you

like better this term, regarding my musical preferences when listening is the issue... Black Metal? Gothic? Doom? Or maybe Ambient? If it was to reduce the area to Gothic Black Metal I could choose anytime for TRISTANIA, THE SINS OF THY BELOVED, the old THEATRE OF TRAGEDY... yet the last TRISTANIA's material left the Black dimension and reached a romantic level... towards Rock... while TSOTB is just a pale copy of the up-mentioned band... TOT became cheap even if its old sound is good... it still comes to a certain saturation... Well, well, under such view, SIRENIA is coming in forth with a Black Gothic in TRISTANIA's first album, "Widow's Weed" manner. And I find it natural as long as this band's leader is no one else but Morten Veland, TRISTANIA's ex-mentor; and to be more correct he is the one who conceived its first albums- so well seen on Metal scene. After the well known break-up Morten had with Vibeke Stene & Co, he decided not to leave the melodic Metal scene bringing up a debut full of Gothic-Atmospheric which is based, of course, on the super-usual contrast (melodic-aggressive), a powerful antagonistic male voice in Black/Death manner, as well as a strong baritone clear one (Jan Kenneth/ELUSIVE), a fragile but predominant female voice (although a little too timid in comparison with what is to be heard in TRISTANIA), abundant synth, diverse choirs, intelligent effects, extremely fast and entertaining guitars while Pete Johansen's violin (THE SCARR) successfully intervenes in the entire 9 tracks! Everything sounds sharp and is excellently envisioned and performed... a well smartened up album which certainly shall strike the extreme melodious side of Metal! As far as the news is regarded, SIRENIA has a "great" minus since the sound is pretty common to Gothic bands from Stavanger, not preserving even a shade of innovation or originality. It is, if you prefer, a kind of continuation of less praised "Beyond The Veil", but with some inspiration of "World Of Glass". All in all: a particular album, pleasant to the ear in headphones as well as on the stage... pretty voluble and full of dynamism and skilfulness! Rating: 0.92/1 (13.06)

SIRIUS (POR)-"Spectral Transition-Dimension Sirius" CD'01 (50.47 min, 11 tracks)
(NOCTURNAL ART)
After a fine welcome for the last album, Draconis & Co. decided to insist on the cosmic dimension as well as on the brutal side so that, in the spring of 2001, they came up with an extremely aggressive fast album featuring a symphonic background. Otherwise, it is just Black Metal, in Nordic style, something between LIMBONIC ART and old EMPEROR yet with a few resemblances of ZYKLON's new album. I observed that, on this album, Faust, Samoth (EMPEROR) and Daemon (LIMBONIC ART/ZYKLON) are invited guests. To be sincere, it really sounds great, full of power and atmosphere yet there is something irritating me... probably it is the constant manner all Black bands from Samoth's label use in interpretation... rather too similar one with the other, too constant in ideas... that is why I can only grant it with pluses for the interpretation part and the quality of sound. One more thing... I found quite remarkable EMPEROR's cover-version of "The Majesty Of The Nightsky".

SKEPTICISM(FIN)-"The Process Of Farmakon" MCD'02 (18. 29 min, 2 tracks)

(RED STREAM)

What can you expect when spelling SKEPTICISM? Funeral Doom Metal of first class! Unfortunately the Finnish refuse to overpass the limits of such style and so, the sound is rather the same, almost identical with the one from earlier albums. There is a difference, of course, and it consists in some supplementary effects placed in the background...as for the rest, an angry gruff voice, extremely lent rhythms, long-lasting guitars and a drummer who awakes from time to time to heat up a little the instrument he is supposed to handle. A few years back, I might have appreciated such orientation, but for the right now, well, let me be excused, I've come to saturation. It is true, since the MCD has solely two tracks, I find quite difficult to define major changes in SKEPTICISM sound.... Let us see how the future album sounds-it is expected for this autumn-and then we may reach a final conclusion. www.farmakon.com
Rating: 0.72/1 (02.07)

SKYMNING (SWE)-"Artificial Supernova" CD'02 (59. 11 min, 9 tracks)

(BLACKEND)

This is another Swedish band performing a Melodic in Gotheborg version but, this time, more industrialized, with distortional voices and Power passages. If their first album "Stormchoirs" insisted on Power Black Metal, well, "Artificial Supernova" returns to origins namely Death Metal but the Industrial valences outline a echo rather different from some other hundreds bands' sound. There are also Black parts created by both voice and guitars' riffs. All in all, the entire album seems a little too fade and monotonous. Perhaps, with a more precise direction instead of this mechanic sound, SKYMNING might succeed convincing us with the future compositions. Rating: 0.65/1 (24.02)

SLEEPLESS (ISR)-"Winds Blow Higher" CD'01 (42. 40 min, 9 tracks)

(THE END)

What is it about this band?! The saxophone reminds me of Angelo Badalamenti and the movie "Twin Peaks". I think it is hard to guess the intention of these two young musicians with this very debut. The "bleak" atmosphere created by various instruments is followed by progressive psychedelic parts even Rock, Jazz, Dark Pop, Ethereal or Gothic, melodic whispering voices, recited intonated lyrics, and strange mixing, a dramatic piano, an amazing keyboard grave and pronounced as well, classical overwhelming guitars, a romantic flute, shy Metal riffs, Alternative echoes and an apocalyptic background... Well, I experienced quite a shock when listening to this album. In fact, not even now, I came out in my senses and I can confess I listened to it for at least five times consecutively... SLEEPLESS can be defined by a sound with a complexity, and diversity that rather bother, it is incredibly well performed and mixed. Inspiration must be the strong point of these two musicians as what they have created engages us into an inedited universe that can only be limited somehow by TIAMAT ("Wildhoney" period), PINK FLOYD,

YES, EMERSON, LAKE AND PALMER, BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL, DECORYAH or UIVER! Such styles fusion simply perplexes yet often the curiosity of discovering new elements keeps you tightly posted to the CD-player. I really know not why, only now, SLEEPLESS managed to release this album since the tracks were conceived and elaborated almost 4-5 years ago! If up to me, Israel means exclusively ORPHANED LAND, well now, SLEEPLESS sound has definitely convinced me that I was wrong. Do trust my words, Maor Appelbaum and David Bendayan have created an exquisite masterpiece of Experimental Progressive Atmospheric Art for which there is no alternative but to pleasantly surprise you as far as the melancholic atmosphere is concerned and as conceptual view as well. You must, no

impact on the side of those who still listen to the same kind of music in for the last 10 years. If sincere, I really do not care, it is too common for Black Metal, too aggressive for Heavy Metal and too old for III Millennium. Perhaps its purpose might be to wake up some nostalgia! The artwork of the booklet seems to be original and in a perfect accordance with the music. Rating: 0.58/1 (23.02)

SOMNUS(USA)-"Through Creation's End" CD'02 (43. 01 min, 8 tracks)

(ROOT OF ALL EVIL)

Quite a nice designation for a band! The American band has now scored the second album, released at the same label as the first one. SOMNUS is a pleasant surprise even if what they play for the moment has been already intensely consumed in Europe... more



doubt, procure this very instant "Winds Blow Higher" and let yourselves bewitched by its mysterious sound...www.sleeplesscd.com. Rating: 0.89/1 (22.02)

SOLSTAFIR (ICE)-"In Blood and Spirit" CD'02 (56. 57 min, 9 tracks)

(ARS METALLI)

This is BURZUM and ENSLAVED at their beginning period in the most Nordic version of whole Europe... coming just from Island. The band was founded almost ten years ago and, during the time, released only a demo, a MCD and a promo-tape. This very one is their debut album and, in the same time, the most aggressive and fast one I have listened to this year. The entire material provides a primitive brutal Black Metal, with an extreme egregious voice and simple resembling modest tunes. It is a real disappointment but I think that this album might reach some

than 5-6 years ago. Which is: a Death Metal structure with a diabolic male voice and guitars in Morrisound style; the musicians added as well a keyboard, reminding of first THE GATHERING, and a female voice generating a nice contrast of some more melodic parts. It doesn't sound bad at all and I took pleasure in listening to it. The Americans conceived and executed tracks with a certain seriousness and strictness. It is a technical Death Metal encircled with melodic, Gothic, atmospheric ingredients and progressive ones as well while there are also imposing guitars' solos and a battery with elaborated roll passes. What else can I say? Excellent implementations as these Americans are in truth talented! The female voice excels not in bright inflexions but neither bothering ones. The CD includes an interesting video-clip, so, all in all, the album is worthy every little

SONATA ARCTICA (FIN)-"Silence" CD'01 (61. 54 min, 13 tracks)

(SPINEFARM)

I pleasantly remember "Eliptica" powerfully stroke STRATOVARIUS fans and all in sympathy with Power Metal. The Finnish' debut was regarded with interest and sensitivity yet also with envy as the one's hope was for the second album to be a bluff or, probably for the best, not to fascinate. Nevertheless, on contrary, SONATA ARCTICA has decided to insist on Epic, Progressive and Heavy Metal and thus, the album can be considered one of the most representatives of its kind. Bombastic keyboards, rhythmical guitars, technical battery, shocking choirs, acoustic guitar tunes, aggressive voice together with a normal melodic one, grand piano and even a female voice... all in all everything melts not at all originally but harmoniously into a crystal recording and a super-natural design of the booklet. DREAM THEATER fans will find as well great pleasure and satisfaction into this sound and, as a recommendation for the album's best track you should try "The Power One". Although I am not mad about such style I must admit it gained my attention for two consecutive auditions yet nothing else. Why so? Perhaps because of the bright glowing appearance of the sound or too much positive energy and optimism and this might become, at a certain point, a major concern. www.sonataarctica.com. Rating: 0.75/1 (2001)

SOURCE OF TIDE (NOR)-"Blueprints" CD'02 (54. 27 min, 13 tracks)

(CANDLELIGHT)

Inside "Kogaionon" no. 6 issue I enclosed an interview with Lord PZ, this band's vocal and in the same time Ihriel's brother who is Ilshan's wife (EMPEROR). These five Norwegians' debut was a surprise for me and I assumed and hoped that the new tracks convey as well a special magnificent and appreciated music. Unfortunately, "Blue Prints" features a rather too avant-garde Metal with many Death Metal riffs, knotty and complex sounds resulted from programming, a perplexing atmosphere and thus perhaps a different kind of extreme Heavy Metal. What is still a remarkable point it represent the strong altering voice of Lord PZ and for the first time we can even hear two voices, the background one, although simpler and rather common, conferring the sound a certain charm. If all tracks sounded like "Ruins Of Beauty", then the entire album might have been considered a jewel. In almost seven minutes, the five musicians harmoniously balance Death aggressive parts with melodic Gothic ones while the two female voices open a hallucinating yet striking universe. Otherwise it is just too much assertiveness crossing over all Metal styles. There is such excellence in interpretation... yet somehow repulsing probably because of the rhythms' breaks and the incandescent keyboard, which are too confusing for my musical tastes. I cannot help but observing the perfect recording status and the studio professional mixing! I wonder how it would be like if listening to Lord PZ' voice throughout a Gothic Metal project... I suppose it would sound intriguing... In fact I believe it for sure. Rating: 0.72/1 (10.02)

SPITE EXTREME WING (ITA)-
"Magnificat" CD'02 (60.34 min, 13 tracks)
(BEYOND)

Although there is nothing new to amaze us, Argento's music (ANTROPOFAGUS) discharges an incredible force able to transpose me back in time right at the roots of unconventional Black Metal, Nordic one. This is a mixture in lack both of creativity and modern atmospheric aspects reminding me of bands like ENSLAVED, DARK THRONE or even BURZUM. Fog's drum (ex-SACRADIS) simply takes over the atmosphere and it is extremely fast, Azoth's bass (ex-ESMEGOR) is grave while the keyboard's effects only fill the parts that tend to be monotonous, Argento's voice is really imposing and quite perfect for both Black and Death Metal. This Hypnotic Black Metal featured by the Italian band manages to be a successful replica for the up mentioned bands but nothing else. The CD booklet is pretty nice, the cover is rather mystical and everything seems to be occult pagan and darkened. I believe this concept is much more profound than I actually characterized I these few words, but those who really want to explore any further I am sure they will discover a parallel word based on a spiritual esoteric dimension. This is an album that might challenge in one's mind the original genuine message of Black Metal of last decade, which unfortunately during the years has been altered by trendy options. Rating: 0.80/1 (07.12)

STAR OF ASH (NOR)-"Iter. Viator"
CD'02 (42.31 min, 7 tracks)
(JESTER)

This is a new title with not much of a resonance but able to gain your attention. Why so? Firstly, because this is Heidi S. Tveitan's project whose name actually equals the identity of Ihriel/PECCATUM. Secondly, because here are as well musicians from (EMPEROR, SOURCE OF TIDE), having Garm/ULVER as remarkable vocal and finally but not the last, because of the musical approach. If I read you the prospect then you can find out that STAR OF ASH' style is Avant-Rock/Neo-Classical/Gothic while CURRENT '93, DEAD CAN DANCE or Craig Armstrong are the guiding marks. I find impossible to describe such! The melancholic note due to the piano is often interrupted by noisy passages, the background effects outline a strange feeling, an emotion of unexpected, from time to time the vocals make their appearance and seem to be apart from the rest, guitars usually dormant all of a sudden explode, the percussion completely confuses..., piano's grave tone spontaneously breaks through the meditation intention, if any possible way of such... and then the choirs... Nah, definitely I cannot handle such task of describing you the music. Well, it is fascinating, exquisite, avant-garde...but I am limited to a status of simple listener. I leave to all who can the job to come up with more detailed and profound appreciations. But I tell you this, I've listened to the album more than five times and I still discovered captivating introspective parts delimited from any palpable axiomatic system. This was a real challenge for my ears! www.jester-records.com Rating: 0.89/1 (23.10)

SUMMONING (AUT)-"Let Mortal Heroes Sing Your Fame" CD'01 (56.28

min, 8 tracks)
(NAPALM)

I can finally write with much pleasure about an album that I listen to almost non-stop for the past months. That is curious since the two Austrian musicians have nothing new to bring into the sound structure but what they do...it happens to sound particularly attractive. The fanciful atmosphere embraces the Epic ambience and the melodic peaceful Black Metal only strike the listener's ears when the aggressive voice can be heard. No longer after I was mesmerized by "Where Hope And Daylight Die", I thought that "Stronghold" might have been the album to make the resistance bridge between Black Metal and Avantgarde Metal since the voice tonality of Richard's girl friend simply was magnificently mixed with the rest of the sound. I was wrong and from this certain point of view, the album disappointed me. Otherwise, there is still just a track signifying the break of common boundaries and this time Richard's voice valences leave their mark upon the entire sound so that DVKE references are more than appropriate and obvious. I even could find some tunes imitating SOPOR AETERNUS! You should keep in mind "Farewell", as it is a fantastic track, one perfect for closing all the accounts! "Minas Morgul" still maintains to be the best SUMMONING album since ever while "Stronghold" is basically axed on Heavy riffs pointing out the keyboard and the voices so that the melancholic dimension turns out to be their strong point. Selenius and Protector in deed did their job again! Rating: 0.91/1 (31.01)

SUNTERRA (AUT)-"Lost Time" CD'02
(45.54 min, 9 tracks)
(WAB)

It crossed my path of this band...rumour after rumour and all kind of stuff during the years and I admit this band gained popularity in Austrian underground due to its seniority. Although the band was founded eight years ago, this is actually the debut. They had released a demo, "In Diebus Illis" but nothing else. The Gothic line approach seems to be a little different from what's trendy and not because of innovation but due to the interpretation. There are: rhythm, melodiousness, atmosphere as well as strength, dynamics and sudden increase. The Gothic line is conducted by a simple balmy female voice and an inspired flute, I'd say that from time to time the Progressive elements insist and even bother for a rather modest sound. The effort and weightiness cannot be denied but there is still something missing for my ears... Perhaps it is because I believe SUNTERRA tried to impose itself throughout a mixture of Metallic styles and thus the result is confusing. Nevertheless the band sounds good, do not misunderstand me! Even Falco's hit, "Out Of The Dark" sounds remarkable! Yet... I smell of a "something is missing here" and I hope for this lack to be soon filled, otherwise...it shall forever be a debutant band. The rest is history. www.sunterra.org Rating: 0.78/1 (29.10)

SUSPERIA (NOR)-"Predominance"
CD'01 (45.11 min, 10 tracks)
(NUCLEAR BLAST/ROCRIS DISC)

Many of you considered the interview with Athera, featured inside last "Kogaionon" issue, as the most successful and detailed one. Thus, I find

inappropriate to get into many more close-ups for the moment, since I have already presented a few opinions in the "reviews" chapter as well, based on the advertorial CD. The line-up is an exceptional one, as it featured also in famous projects (DIMMU BORGIR, SATYRICON or OLD MAN'S CHILD). SUSPERIA comes back in forth with a well-rounded album, not at all original yet without commercial influences, excellently interpreted. No doubt, it is Black Metal Nordic style, but there are present as well Thrash, Death, Heavy or Power frames while Athera voice's inflexions professionally prove a certain diversified approach of these multiple styles. I personally prefer "Illusion of Evil" demo, not necessarily because of the keyboards but for the simpler and straighter manner of performing music. I consider SUSPERIA "on the wave" but I find difficult to appreciate for how long. If keeping the same musical line, I believe, not even the fact Tjoldav or Cyrus are big famous names, on Nordic scene, could bring much help. If only Nuclear Blast can do miracles for it seems that Germans own the art of selling their products while quality is often left behind... www.susperia.net, Rating: 0.69/1 (2001)

TACTILE GEMMA (NOR)-"Tactile Gemma" CD'01 (69.05 min, 13 tracks)
(SEASON OF MIST)

This time I can tell you for sure we could enjoy an original futuristic musical project. Unfortunately, I must say it is a little too thorny for an easy-fitting audition but no doubts this is a very complex and attractive album for each interested ear. And I find this quite natural as long as the two voices are not other but sisters Edvardsen, Monika (ATROX) and Ann-Mari (THE 3RD AND THE MORTAL). The psychedelic outward show is completed by simple heavy sounds with electro or pop shades since Rune is quite a maestro in creating the necessary background for such strong female voices. The label's references regarding TACTILE GEMMA point out a strange kind of mixture between BJORK and PORTISHEAD yet in a metallic version. I can only tell you that if you like ATROX and THE 3RD AND THE MORTAL, then, this new project most certainly shall gain your interest. Rating: 0.78/1 (2001)

TEARS OF DECAY (GER)-"Saprophyt"
CD'02 (33.24 min, 10 tracks)
(CUDGEL)

Oh, this is just another Death Metal album in the line! This is just another band trying to copy what American extreme bands used to perform in times before! The Brutal Death Metal approach of these five young musicians has Grind echoes reaching an apocalyptic sound with a throaty horrible voice, Speed guitars and repulsive battery. It might be a delight for those who still vibrate at aggressiveness in music! Everything is killing! Otherwise, there is nothing new or brilliant on the horizon, just another album ready to discharge the troopers' negative energies! And frankly, in front of such violence, who can actually evaluate their performances? The CD includes as well two tracks live available as video-tracks. www.tears-of-decay.de Rating: 0.72/1 (23.10)

TENHI (FIN)-"Airut:ciwi" MCD'01
(18.55 min, 3 tracks) (PROPHECY)

After conceiving and publishing Tyko's interview due to his "Kauan" debut I

have heard so little about TENHI: a few attempts for un successful live performances, rumours they have had composed new tracks but Prophecy were extremely slow.... Finally here came this strange Digipack containing three tracks of which two are more than experimental, Ethno without any melodic line, pretty short and confusing even boring. In exchange, there is the second track apt to disclose more than 10 minutes of calm traditional folk music, extremely simple and atmospheric with progressive yet also Rock hues, piano, violin, flute, guitar and synth, Jew's Harp, percussion and, of course, peaceful voice of Tyko, Ilkka si Ilmari. I hope not exaggerating if saying "Kielo" is the best and most inspired TENHI composition I ever listened so far! If you wish for finding the present time, then "Kielo" would help you to discover the ultimate absence of any temporal mark, any bonding to routine, worries or stress; it simply is just another manner of relaxation and inner calm. It is only a shame that one single track represents their MCD. Should we speculate this fact as a regular way of making few extra money? Maybe so. But all interested people can easily give up 2-3 beers and buy this Digipack. As far as money is concerned I find it doesn't deserve the effort yet for a collector it could become a jewel! E-mail: www.tenhi.de. Rating: 0.72/1 (2001)

TERATISM (USA)-"Ex Infernus"
MCD'02 (16.11 min, 4 tracks)
(ROOT OF ALL EVIL)

I just believed that bands like TERATISM existed no more in America or, if they did, labels researched not promoting issues of such kind. I was wrong and here I am writing again about a style I used to fill pages with, some time ago. Raw Black Thrash Metal- apocalyptic, full of regrets and incantations, some modest effects and ruthless tunes. Neither the sound is a performance; therefore I see no reason for these tracks, already released initially on a demo, to require a MCD. But this is not my business. I find awkward that the band's members played as well in other formulas such as: LORD OF ALL DESIRES, ANAL BLAST, PENTAGORIA, MOURNING or THEATRE OF THE MACABRE. Soon the debut album shall be released, "Invocatum Furae Diabolis", along with a CD-ROM video. Hell straight in your houses! If among you there are as well "mentally deranged" ones who desire to "heal" and feed their souls with Holocaust Metal, well, just try TERATISM and genocide becomes even closer. www.teratism666.com Rating: 0.65/1 (17.08)

THEATRES DES VAMPIRES (ITA)-
"Bloody Lunatic Asylum" CD'01 (61.58 min, 11 tracks)

(BLACKEND/PLASTIC HEAD)
Almost incredible the sound of this project! I have listened to "Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens" promo tape a few years ago but it did not even cross my mind Lord Vampyr would be capable of offering such album for the present times! What trophies can TDV be proud of before the signing with PHR? There are only two materials: "Vampirisme, necrophilia, necrosadisme, necrophagie" (1995) and "The Vampire Chronicles" (1999). If they did not sustain some gigs in England (Myth si Vampiria III) most certainly, the sixth musicians would not have managed to penetrate the modest

and overfilled UG! I should also mention that since Lord Vampyr knew Gian Pyres (CRADLE OF FILTH) it was quite a big help for TDV to contact Tim Fraser, CHRISTIAN DEATH manager, and thus PHR label. During the live performance, the Britain were surprised indeed of such "horrific" atmosphere this Italian band could create while being supported in ideas by David Bracci, the well known "effect maker" for horror artist Dario Argento! Vampirical obsessions combined with themes such sex blood or horror imposes TDV as a respectable band with an exquisite background if taking in account that Lord Vampyr has studied for some years this particular field! Their sound is complex, various but I could not say as following any particular style although the most appropriate would be Black, Gothic, Dark, Epic and Atmospheric Metal shades. The male voice has certain inflexions that remind me of Dani/CRADLE OF FILTH while the female ones, rather gathered together as small choirs, perfectly harmonizes with the rest of the atmosphere, which I must say is built up by modest players without noticeable skills. The sampler creates a magic aura while the other accessories do nothing but to paint an occult, horror, violent less yet captivating and pleasing to the ear picture. From another point of view, the multitudes of ideas and trends slightly get boring for the listener, as TDV is a band that can only be appreciated at its true value when playing live. Rating: 0.81/1 (2001)

THEATRES DES VAMPIRES(ITA)-
"Suicide Vampire" CD'02 (42. 06 min, 10 tracks)

(BLACKEND)
Sick diabolic minds...! The new material, more symphonic, Gothic Atmospheric and orchestral than the up mentioned one with two female voices strongly supported by clear imposing male vocals as well as by the presence of amazing choirs and outstanding non-Metal instruments! Black Gothic Horror Epic Symphonic Metal fusion is actually impressing and sounds avant-garde awards the sound with a proper unique dimension. Well, I'd give anything to see and listen to them live! One small detail: between the two albums they released "Tubilacum Anno Dracula 2001", a diabolic material but I tend to see it more like a show than like a conceptual one. www.theatres-des-vampires.com Rating: 0.88/1 (2.3.11)

THE BLOOD DIVINE(UK)-
"Rise Pantheon Dreams" CD'02 (55. 50 min, 14 tracks)

(PEACEVILLE)
This is just another material in the name of money-extortion! Or perhaps it is in the name of making up for the money invested years back. I guess I couldn't precisely say but it is of no interest either. This very CD puts forward a kind of "Best Of..." both studio albums "Awaken" and "Mystica" + some demo version. Although Darren White (ex-ANATHEMA) owns a remarkable voice, with all my sympathy, I must confess that whatever he tried here with the three CRADLE OF FILTH ex-members actually left me insensible. The mixture of atmospheric Doom with Stone Rock and echoes of Flower-Power might be a suitable choice, but not for me. I have nothing to comment any further regarding this material; it is just a collection of tracks!

Rating: 0.71/1 (24.10)

THE CREST (NOR)-
"Letters From Fire" CD'02 (44. 59 min, 11 tracks)

(SEASON OF MIST)
This is a strange trend of the French label, from Black Metal to Gothic and now to Dark Rock with Pop hues! It seems like being quite a fashion for the bands to have female voices and a Rock sound rupturing Metal scene since THE CREST are simply a clone of CYBELE. The band started to play in 1996 a Melodic Doom Death Metal, but after a few failed attempts it re-profiled into this commercial and consumable style, based on simple guitars' tunes and a linear programming, which is rather boring. This style might reach an impact but certainly not on me since I was and am not "stroke"! Their music, supported on Electro elements, follows closely new MORTIIS technique. I must say that the recording and mixing are very good, especially since the chosen studio was Sound Suite (TRISTANIA, THE SINS OF THY BELOVED...). Rating: 0.68/1 (19.02)

THE DREAMSIDE (HOL)-
"Mirror Moon" CD'01 (50. 10 min, 10 tracks)

(SERENADES)
The third album of these Dutch goes on with the same Gothic line they started almost eight years ago but less commercial and with underground hues, a much sober and grave sound. Dark Wave and Electro tunes are not so current while the voices are rather much closer to Doom/Death side than to Ethereal one. I must admit it is a charming album, rougher than the preceding one and there is nothing more to be said. It is a simple fashionable album which did receive and match up to its expected credits. Rating: 0.71/1 (31.01)

THE END RECORDS (USA)-
"At The End Of Infinity" CD'02 (45. 50 min, 8 tracks)

(THE END)
There is a new compilation of the American label featuring tracks from the latest releases of WINDS, ARCTURUS, GREEN CARNATION, VIRGIN BLACK, SLEEPLESS and SCHOLOMANCE plus a track that is about to be out on the new AGALLOCH album. Nothing new or exquisite to be mentioned, it is just another classic way for a label to promote its bands. Good Heaven's... this CD doesn't cost a thing as it would definitely be one of the lamentable means to extort on the fans. (30.03)

THE GREAT DECEIVER(SWE)-
"A Venom Well Designed" CD'02 (45. 02 min, 11 tracks)

(PEACEVILLE)
I don't understand how such thing happened...for a so inspired label, when choosing bands, to actually deal with these Swedes! It may be because the band's leader is no one else but Tomas Lindberg, a respected representative of deceased AT THE GATES. Or perhaps because of some other sonorous names related to bands such as DIABOLIQUE, LIERS IN WAIT or GROTESQUE... Well, These Swedes' music doesn't outrun the standard level of confusion and the muddle of Metal with Hard-Core or Industrial tunes has nothing new or interesting to bring for my delicate ears. Perhaps there is about some Thrash reminiscences or a few echoes of AT THE GATES times... is it only my self-induced suggestion? I don't know, but I don't think I could find something special here and neither

for the Metal scene this will mark! It is just a mediocre attempt to prove that aggressive Metal can be kept alive throughout Core experiments! Unfortunately, this is artificial... Disgusting! Rating: 0.67/1 (18.08)

THE KOVENANT(UK)-
"In Times Before The Light" CD'02 (56. 55 min, 10 tracks)

(HAMMERHEART)
Those who know me are definitely familiar with my feeling towards this album as it is one of my top ten favourite ones! Moreover, now listening to this ten sequences, I find the way back in time when "Einherjum" magazine desperately was trying to make real a label as well while the debutant bands were COVENANT and TROLL. By that time, such sound wasn't quite attractive for other labels since the fashion was reflected by IMMORTAL or GORGOROTH! After some unsuccessful attempts, COVENANT managed to sign with the British label Mordgrimm and thus this album actually saw the light of the day. I remember there wasn't enough promotion but those who followed the two musicians' path and evolution perfectly knew that "In Times before the Light" was a masterpiece. This was the meaning of surprise (for the majority) when they came to sign with Nuclear Blast. Beginning with "Nexus Polaris", the history is well known for everybody and "Animatronic" success directed the band right on the top. Re-editing the first album was a consequence of a total sound re-mixing job. The bombastic keyboard is touched now with some Electro-Industrial valences so that the material becomes a bridge between old and new preserving the same THE KOVENANT essence. I guess it is pointless to chat on this issue since we all know that the Norwegians (Nagash and Blackheart) are artists in all their actions, therefore, you should reach delight by listening to it. I once liked the album and I actually love the new touches, the sound is even modern, full of symphonic atmospheric elements with primitive vocals (no remix!) and a battery sometimes rather pestiferous. We can easily say it is a new facet of the ten tracks expressed now in the light of an exceptional spatial dimension: Cyber Space Majestic Black Metal. Rating: 0.90/1 (28.10)

THE WOUNDED (HOL)-
"Monument" CD'02 (68. 50 min, 12 tracks)

(COLD BLOOD INDUSTRIES)
Well, here I am, having the chance of listening to a high quality sample of Gothic Wave finally coming from this Dutch label! The young musicians released their second album (after "The Art Of Grief") yet this is the first I listened to. The low clear natural voice reminds me of THE CURE and the instruments' atmosphere tends to PARADISE LOST or ANATHEMA. I wouldn't say it is Metal because I think all diverse tendencies rather create a Rock outline, very commercial and digestible. The experimental hue denotes a PINK FLOYD shade. Even so, generally speaking, the entire album seems to focus on a melodious depressive glacial Gothic sound absolutely perfect fit for critical moods. Although it is hard to get imposed inside such field, the Dutch quartet indeed did not make a fool of themselves in spite of a pale message they promoted. Rating: 0.71/1 (09.03)

THEE MALDOROR

KOLLECTIVE(ITA)-
"New Era Viral Order" CD'02 (48. 57 min, 9 tracks)

(CODE666)
This is another oddity on my desk! But this time, it seems like the band is quite known in Italian Metal underground! To my shame (mea culpa!) this is the first material I come to listen to and I really am curious to know how the former ones sound. Just think about...the band was founded in 1991!!! Initially known as INQUISITOR and then as FUNERAL FOG, TMK releases, during the years, some demos confirmed by the Italian mass-media and two obscure albums "Ars Magika" and "In Saturn Mystique". Let me describe the music, which is hmmm... damn hard: Black, Industrial, Ritualistic, EBM and Dark Ambient... a mixture of aggressive Black Metal with RAISON D'ETRE or any Swedish band from CMI. The drum-machine is infernal and interminable; the aggressive/sick voice breaks any form of melancholia or peaceful atmosphere, Black/Death Metal rhythms embrace in absolute chaos Ambient ones...as it is a proper background for Lucifer to raise! How could I know such? Well, I couldn't... just guessing! Anyway, this is a ritual holocaust as far as Metal is regarded and it would be better to listen to such only for the sake of finding out the Italian manner or conceiving such. As for the execution... I just didn't realise it was about a synchronisation or secondary effects... since all is an infernal noise interrupted by sinister, macabre passages. Is this a different face of Satan? I understood this musical concept has a strong background as far as lyrics' message is concerned but this is for you to find out by yourselves if visiting their web page, www.maldororkollective.net Rating: 0.85/1 (23.09)

THINE(UK)-
"In Therapy" CD'02 (56. 43 min, 12 tracks)

(PEACEVILLE)
It is true what they say about Britannic scene, as it is one of a kind, avant-garde and full of original resources. If ANATHEMA features now a melodious Metal, full of Rock shades, THINE is not so far from their colleagues. It is just that ANATHEMA insists on melancholic, calm rhythms while THINE has rather an introverted sound orientated towards Alternative or even Grunge. The clear voice communicates with guitars' buzzing, echoes and effects are at the right place and everything is situated at the limit between dreaming and desolation, optimism and deception, isolation and regrets... I find almost impossible to speak about such album! It is unlike their debut, "A Town Like This", less Metallic and opened for faded timeless and in lack of stylistic boundaries Rock. It is a weird sound, pleasing for audition but completely tore apart from the flash reality of musical scene. I guess this album could satisfy any listener, but only fewest shall understand it. I cannot pretend I got the message, in the most appropriate shape. Maybe you will... Rating: 0.78/1 (21.08)

THRONE OF CHAOS(FIN)-
"Pervertigo" CD'02 (37. 56 min, 9 tracks)

(SPINEFARM)
I have no clue what is it about with these five Finnish' intention. They released a MCD, "Fata Morgana" and because of this they managed to impress Spinefarm and then two well-

interpreted albums followed, "Menace & Prayer" and "Truth & Tragedy". The band's style seems not to have any logic at all while the mixture of Thrash and Death weirdly oscillates with Power and Heavy Metal and, in the end, all is build on an Epic structure. In other words, if drums, Keyb and guitars seem to be Metallic, well, the interchange of male voices: one screamed violent and angry with another clear calm and perhaps too high for such style (Niklas Isfeldt/DREAM EVIL) has a strange effect of completely confusing the listener. The Finnish are first-rate instrumentalists but here from... there is a long-long way to be mentioned about extreme Metal! The material did not ring a bell for my ears although the Heavy Metal parts are at least appealing and pleasantly melodic. The entire TOC concept seems to be based on paradox and the final product—music is a new experiment, a stylistic mixture extremely rare... yet one I don't think would or could impress any of musical fans. Or maybe if there are some compromises to be made...
www.tocrocks.com Rating: 0.75/1 (17.08)

THYRFING(SWE)-"Vansinnesvisor" CD'02 (42. 58 min, 8 tracks) (HAMMERHEART)
Deception replicate! I still don't understand why rather all bands return to aggressive Metal despite the fact that they imposed so far in a different manner, definitely not a trendy one. THYRFING became well known as a promoter of Viking Folk Metal besides HELHEIM's Norwegians. During the past years, the six Swedish offered three intelligent well reviewed albums invested with great Nordic Medieval and Pagan Metal. "Valdr Galga" shocked the entire mass-media, while "Urkraft" made them quite popular on Metal scene. The new tracks are persistent on Metal in melodic Swedish Death Metal version with Black voice and some Folk tunes. There is atmosphere, melody, rhythm... but the inspiration and creativity are missing while a thing is pretty certain: not being able to surpass their own boundaries. Personally, I prefer listening to the debut album because it is more explosive and there is in much more of their souls. The last Swedish's album I believe is also the last one at Hammerheart as I see no reason for the Dutch label to promote them any further. What it was to be said I guess they told and it seems like time to retire has come... or maybe to re-orientate... In lack of advancement and innovative ideas, there are very few chances for them to maintain on the current scene. Perhaps more chances if the fans refuse to believe what is actually very clear: the album is a modest linear and rather monotonous, even confusing. To put it mildly the performing part is OK and so are the synchronisation of all instruments and the quality sound.
Rating: 0.73/1 (25.06)

TIDEFALL (NOR)-"Instinct Gate" CD'01 (42. 03 min, 8 tracks) (NUCLEAR BLAST/ROCRIS DISC)
It is almost incredible to observe how promising bands, at their debut, lose the nerve in the meanwhile of their career. This is the case of these Norwegians who, after an intriguing debut at NAP label, sign for Nuclear Blast and all seems to follow an ascendant trend. Perhaps that is the truth yet, up to my opinion, what these five musicians perform on "Instinct Gate" does not charm at all. Let's clear

my impression. When everybody plays Black Metal in Nordic technique and such albums record great sales, why should be innovative to create another approach of Black Metal? There should be no sense... the risk must be too overwhelming. So, it is much simpler to put in order some classical Black Metal passages into an atmospheric background (abundant keyboard), extremely fast battery, an angry voice, some special effects here and there... and here it comes another album—another subject of discussion. If I had to reflect, strictly from musical point of view, TIDEFALL might be a serious band, with an impressing sound, much rhythm and melodiousness, plenty of aggressiveness too and connections with hallucinating cosmic dimensions. Their strong point, in my personal view, is the battery while the sound's specific feature might be the keyboard. This is an album dedicated to all modern Black Metal fans...it might cause some waves yet definitely not a storm. Rating: 0.73/1 (13.01)

TO ELYSIUM (HOL)-"Dearest Vile" CD'02 (37. 02 min, 11 tracks) (COLDBLOOD)
This is another atmospheric clone Death Metal mixed with Gothic and Doom. This time it is about seven members ex-ALTAR, SERAPHIQUE and BLACK OUT and they feature on these 11 tracks what was en-vogue 3-4 years ago namely music based on contrasts as well in rhythms as in voices... Melody, aggressiveness, extreme dreadful male voice, warm comfortable female one, abundant keyboard, Heavy tunes and... nothing else or more. A pleasant product yet in lack of originality. www.toelysium.com. Rating: 0.71/1 (02.04)

TRAIL OF TEARS (NOR)-"A New Dimension Of Might" CD'02 (54. 19 min, 10 tracks) (NAPALM)
After a generous interview with vocal player Ronny Thorsen, in "Kogaionon" magazine, the Norwegians faced a huge success with "Profundemonium", an album indeed desired by all Melodic Metal fans, especially since the debut, Disclosure In Red" was a sensational one. There is a myth telling that a wonder lasts no more than three days...very true when the mixture of aggressiveness and melodiousness actually finds a great impasse while the contrast of voices fade away because of Helena's missing. In fact, her voice was a pleasant imposing one but it seems like her obsession for modelling kept her away from Metal and her own site is exclusively dedicated to such career. Ronny just found himself in the position of looking for a new soprano and thus finally chose Cathrine Paulsen. It wasn't a bad choice but neither a too inspired one. But let me be more unequivocal... the new sound is more complex and better performed, the instrumentalists maturity can be easily recognized from guitars' synchronization, synth and drums... but no more and the melancholic aura has suffered much, what was Gothic and we got used with... completely disappeared as Death progression became pronounced and the male voice is rather too aggressive than the female one which can only be heard here and there and definitely less enthusiastic and less inspired. I do admit there are few passages in which the male voice is clear and so, the sound is superior. But except this it is just Gothic Death/Black Metal in Nordic style, structured on a

melodic trendy basis and upon guitars insisting on tougher riffs. As far as the interpretation is regarded, this material seems to be OK... but for the inspiration and stylistic direction...I guess it is an album more than modest and rather too diverse. We have as well a FAITH NO MORE cover-version entitled "Caffeine" of which I have kind regards as I really enjoyed the Metallic version, although this band does not please me at all. I might be wrong but as far as I can choose the reference album of theirs is "Disclosure In Red". www.redheaven.com Rating: 0.78/1 (17.08)

TRISTANIA (NOR)-"World Of Glass" CD'01 (55. 43 min, 9 tracks) (NAPALM)
What can I say about a band that crossed over the average line that delimitates other analogous bands? The new album is really fantastic! In deed, it is much too commercial, I would say with too many Rock flashes but would it matter? Of course not, since everything sounds great being well balanced dominating and strongly attractive. In other words, TRISTANIA goes for the same complementary line, the female voice (Vibeke Stene) often communicates with the antagonistic one (Ronny Thorsen/TRAIL OF TEARS), as well as with the clear male ones (Osten Bergoy si Jan Barkved), guitars perform divergent riffs, from Rock and Gothic to Black and Death Metal. Einar's synth reminds of Industrial hues, the choral arrangements feature classical elements, and Pete Johansen's violin (THE SCARR) transmits the listener a nostalgic mood while Kenneth Olson's battery is simple but potent... all in all it is a TRISTANIAN sound! It seems like the missing of the vocal Morten Veland did practically not affect this album. If "Beyond The Veil" was too soft or Black Metal, well, "World Of Glass" is absolutely different since the romantic aura can provide the listener such certain mood of peace and comfort which is rarely met in Gothic Metal! If "Widow's Weeds" can be judged as the best Gothic Black Metal album of the last five years, the new one exceeds by far the Gothic borders, as diversity and sum of all influences make almost impossible any characterization of such new style! Perhaps it is about Romantic Metal! If I had to add one more single detail...it would be that when playing live, TRISTANIA are real maestros and thus only envy and limitation of some might underline negative aspects of this album! www.tristania.com. Rating: 0.95/1 (11.02)

TRONUL ASCUNS(ROM)-"Eon" CD'02 (35. 18 min, 10 tracks)
I might be away too subjective this time but I guess it doesn't matter any more. I know the person who is behind this masque for quite some good years and it happened that we shared together many of underground music satisfactions. Although he is at the ninth demo (!!!), solely this very material seems to have the quality of a sound that deserves a real attention. Music created on computer/synth happens to have become a fashion already and since MORTIIS experience until nowadays there are thousand musicians, all over the world, who use and take advantage of such modern techniques in order to develop diverse sonorities. Some do that for the fun and others really believe in. If the sound quality has no minuses, the imminent

danger might be the monotony as the sound can anytime be labelled as an arid one. Moreover, you need patience, interest and an adequate mood to listen to such tunes. TRONUL ASCUNS is an acoustic project dominated by a meditative aura, from time to time darkened full of effects with immediate impact, oscillating sounds and rhythmic intercessions. I really have a hard time in placing TRONUL ASCUNS in a certain trend! I guess it is situated somewhere at the crossroad of Dark with Ambient, a PENITENT without voice but warmer and more welcoming! There are some introvert shadows of Electro, even Post-Classic or Wave. It seems like DVKE or ICE AGES might have been sources of inspiration yet not as far as melody is regarded but as a manner of executing and sonorous effect. I also notice a track named "Kogaionon" besides titles as "Muntele Infinit"/"The Infinite Mountain" or "In varsta de 100 de ani"/"Old of One Hundred Years"... Much more simplistic yet more direct and in lack of Gothic successions as in ARCHAOS case, more optimistic and digestible than THY VEILS, TRONUL ASCUNS keeps on identifying a distinct egotist universe that, I believe in a short while, might catch life as well in the listeners' mind. It is a very ambitious project, full of devotion but I think that the multidimensional concept sometimes can bother/ or become boring for the ear of a superficial listener like I might be... or who knows... "spini mei sunt astre in abisul oniric"/"my thorns are celestial spheres in the oneric abyss"... Most certainly, Lus' obsessions have a deep background but I found myself lost somewhere!
! lus29@rol.ro, www.freewebs.com/tronulascuns Rating: 0.80/1 (30.11)

TROOPER(ROM)-S/T MCD'02 (24. 26 min, 4 tracks) (HMM-RO)
I believe the most appropriate manner to value a band is to listen to it both in studio version and live. TROOPER is the most valuable exponent of Romanian Heavy Metal in the past years and I can sustain such with no shades of doubt. I do acknowledge heavy Metal is not really my cup of tea as I rarely come to listen to this style, but when I do, I prefer choosing from great ones: IRON MAIDEN or JUDAS PRIEST, old albums! I came into possession of the CD at Metal Festival-Cluj-Napoca as I received it from Adi Ilie but I forgot it in my car and only last couple of days I actually found it among others in my carrier. This is why you can notice a delay of my review. By now, I am pretty sure that everybody has listened to at least one track of them and thus my comments can only coincide or not with yours. So, all is professional sounds clear elegant, full of rhythm and energy, explosive guitars' riffs, technical battery, specific voices for such style (and perhaps of Power's as well) and an incendiary atmosphere! Yet, back to the beginning...I find exquisite that there are no differences between the sound in studio and live, which denotes an accurate attention of the musicians for all kind of technical details so that undeniably TROOPER's sound reached a certain high quality no matter the conditions. In fact, I really don't think I ever listened to a Romanian Heavy Metal band to sound so accurate... Unfortunately, the band is in lack of originality as it is just a copy irreproachably following international

bands' musical orientations. Or should I count as original the fact that the lyrics are in Romanian language? Anyway, having a perfect instrumentation, voices with "mioritic" (Romanian traditional/folklore) lines... They seem to shock the autochthon listener since it is an occidental sound. I think it is a pity for such appraisable surprises to be met only in Heavy Metal field as far as Romania is regarded. www.hmm.ro/trooper Rating: 0.85/1 (22.09)

TVMVLVS SERAPHIM(ITA)-"Centenarians'Divine Lvnacy" CD'02 (42.00 min, 5 tracks) (BEYOND)

Naked Cold Meat Industry!!! This is dreadful Dark Ambient bombed with Industrial roars and noises! It is an apocalyptic sober sound engaging a negative energy, in lack of melody or any other digestible mark! Echoes, waves, howling, thunders, electronic effects... or in other words, it is a sinister atmosphere characterized by terms like solitude, isolation, pessimism and sadness. tvmvlvsrphim@hotmail.com Rating: 0.70/1 (08.11)

TVANGESTE (RUS)-"Damnation Of Regiomontum" CD'01 (51.42 min, 6 tracks) (VALGALDER)

It is incredible how good this album can sound! Although it is almost a year since I have it, I still listen to it any time I have the opportunity and with the same pleasure. Perhaps it is because of its stylistic diversity obtained by these endowed Russians while Black or Doom are solely a few succinct marks. Well, well... what could we find here?... Female voices, diverse male ones, intense keyboard, violin, cello, ultra-rapid rhythms in accordance with melancholic parts dominated by piano and whispered lyrics, Heavy Metal guitars... The entire complex sound mesmerizes and attracts like a magnet, the rhythms' changes and the amount of trends presented inside the tracks, which are rather too extended (about 9-10 minutes), simply prove seriousness and inspiration. It is curious that the album was conceived almost four years ago yet only after sales of 5000 samples inside the former USSR (tapes only) the album succeeded to penetrate the rest of the world and all due to this fresh Norwegian label. I truly recommend it! www.tvangeste.com. Rating: 0.85/1 (04.03)

URGRUND(AUS)-"The Graven Sign" CD'02 (36.46 min, 10 tracks) (BAPHOMET)

Here comes another band born too late for such a consumed style! Disciples of furious Black Metal featuring Death and Thrash frames can now cherish a few dozens of minutes full of aggressiveness but, be aware, no more than that. It looks like a pale album to me with a linear boring common sound. I wonder who has the patience to listen to such tunes any more... www.ausmetal.net/urgrund Rating: 0.69/1 (03.07)

V/A-"Victory Through Total Domination" Comp.Vol III CD'02 (73.34 min, 15 tracks) (NO COLOURS)

Nothing new, nothing spectacular, it is just a compilation of bands that signed with the German label. Some of tracks are included as well on their albums, others are exclusive. Therefore, if you

share the same mind as the ones behind No Colours, then bands like GRAVELAND, LORD WIND, WELTMACHT or CURSE could satisfy your hunger of extreme Black Metal. Rating: 0.71/1 (23.10)

VIKING CROWN (USA)-"Banished Rhythmic Hate" CD'01 (46.56 min, 11 tracks) (SEASON OF MIST)

When Philip Anselmo had taken the decision to experience styles that are more brutal I found it strange and I thought it was nothing but a simple collaboration. Wrong! It seems like his friendship with Killjoy/NECROPHAGIA conducted to a new project, as this very example can prove. Moreover, the two have brought Opal Enthroned (SOUTHERN ISOLATION/NECROPHAGIA) to play keyboard so that weirdness might gain its real place. There are 11 tracks oscillating between a rarely seen primitivism, an Ugly Black Metal with an underground sound (since BURZUM or MAYEM earlier times of glory), a desolate oppressive overwhelming psychedelic Ambient. Maybe it is a different kind of Ethereal-Gothic, simply hard to explain in ordinary words. From another certain point of view (the horror one), the album looks OK, from another (the innovative one), it becomes monotonous and much too sinister for my ears. One could be seized with horror if listening to VIKING CROWN: all is dark, melancholic and „extremely hideous"! Rating: 0.61/1 (2001)

VINTERSORG(SWE)-"Visions From The Spiral Generator" CD'02 (41.00 min, 9 tracks) (NAPALM)

Vintersorg's (Andreas Hedlund) new album was quite expected by all Metal breathing and mostly because of its original sound is a huge attraction for many "angry people". VARGATRON, (the initial name) marked the appearance with "Hedniskhjartad" -MCD, in 1998 and then followed "Till Fjalls" and "Odemarkens Son"-two albums full of Folk Metal while in 2000 "Cosmic Genesis" is released and became the best and complex of all. This is probably due to the cooptation of Mattias Marklund, a guitar player of first class. Vintersorg considers then that the project needs to become a real band and, close up to his involvement in last BORKNAGAR's album, Asgeir Mickelson (SPIRAL ARCHITECT), an excellent drummer is convinced to take part on the new album. Moreover, Asgeir brings Steve DiGiorgio (DEATH, SADUS, TESTAMENT, CONTROL DENIED) with him at the recording thus the bass part is irrefragable. Recorded in three different locations (Sweden, Norway and USA), the material reached now an impressive form and an explosive strength. I do reckon, I've seen them live and they do kick asses with such great impact to the public! This last album, although very short, is taken over by a Folk aura while in the very same time the elaborated Metal generates assorted interferences and the keyboard assimilates Hippie, Flower Power traces. The clear voice mixes with the Black violent one, Heavy riffs are broken up by acoustic ones; the melody and atmosphere here created delimit VINTERSORG from any other band of sort. It matters not that much if it is about Heavy Metal or Progressive since the most important aspect is

VINTERSORG offering now a super-album which can anytime be considered a veritable source of inspiration for a lot of young bands; the artistic dimension and the performing one are definitely the VINTERSORG's strong points. www.vintersorg.com. Rating: 0.82/1 (26.06)

VOID OF SILENCE (ITA)-"Criteria ov 666" CD'02 (50.53 min, 9 tracks) (CODE666)

"Toward The Dusk" was the Italians' debut and in spite of the fact it was extremely weird and darkened, there was no supplementary intelligence added to Dark Industrial Ambient scene. The new compositions sound completely different. The Apocalyptic Doom structure is harmoniously mixed with Ambient and even Power-Noise, Fabban's sick voice (ABORYM) is seconded by a voice reminding me of first IN THE WOODS... album. I think it is a unique and successful arrangement, while the calm and yet overwhelming rhythm of guitars' tunes extends the agony created by the synths and everything is chaos, depression, negation, somberness... When listening to VOID OF SILENCE, you practically experience hell on earth and the entire atmosphere created by Ricardo Comferti's instruments might inspire you suicidal thoughts and deranged ideas. This specimen of Negative Apocalyptic Metal should be listened to only when surrounded by other people; otherwise the whole negative electric energy might cause an implosion. This could be regarded as a new method of intensive therapy for all romantic people or dreamers. The Digipack is, exactly like in ENID's case, excellently conceived since Giuseppe Ferrillo made himself as well quite a famous professional web-designer as years passed by. It might be intriguing to match a horror movie picture with such sound-track, in the middle of the night... all by yourselves and perhaps in a pagan spirits haunted castle... You should try visiting their site in order to resume to a better picture of the demonic world such music generated. www.dauphins.com/void. Rating: 0.75/1 (23.02)

VOKODLOK (ROM)-"Unchain The Wolf" CD'01 (18.18 min, 7 tracks) (BEAUTY OF PAIN)

Inspired of mystical creature from Transylvania, the four Romanian present on this demo a few tracks in an aggressive Black Death Metal manner with a bad recording and an unfortunate mixing. The sound's linearity is just another negative aspect of this demo while the guitars' hell simply maintains the same during the entire album except a few calm parts. The demonic voice perfectly fits with drums' infernal rhythm. So, all in all, it is an "angry" debut dedicated to all Scandinavian Black Metal disciples. I find sad and painful to notice that young bands desire not to impose themselves through a personal style. Perhaps if this very debut appeared a couple of years ago, in the same time with WICCAN REDE, VOKODLOK would have met instantly a great success. But in these conditions, solely with a simple primitive less original Black Metal I have no idea what kind of impact these boys expect or hope for! There might be a chance if getting some support from their friends from NEGURA BUNGET! Yet, maybe I shouldn't be so critical since VOKODLOK still plays OK even if their sound might be considered by most of

you leftover... a little bit in the wrong place and time... vokodloks@usa.net. Rating: 0.68/1 (10.03)

WELTENBRAND (LICH)-"In Gottes Oder des Teufels Namen" CD'01 (48.46 min, 10 tracks) (MOS)

I have anxiously waited for this album to appear since I am, as well as Oliver Falk also, a DVKE fan. I was almost sure that the five would follow the same line as they did on the previous ones but I experienced the surprise to notice on their fourth album a few major changes in sound and concept as well. If the voices are now clearer and rather "on the first line", the instruments' sound, Oliver's work, strives after comparisons with real orchestration while the accessories such as violin and timpani introduce an affectionate note to WELTENBRAND music. Dark Metal inspiringly interweaves the sad parts and romantic ones, the contrast between the two voices governs the atmosphere, the Wave frames are notable here and there and I must admit that the tracks' length points out the seriousness of the musicians. Despite all these favourable aspects I find the album such an elusive one, less influential with a pale message but without that expressiveness they used us with from the first two albums. I think it is a little too diffident if comparing with what the ex-members, Richard Lederer, advances now through out in DVKE or ICE AGES. If "less influential" means linear, then I am in the position of saying that the current tracks generate a mood for temporary meditation. I believe that the album was conjured up in haste and thus there is something missing. Otherwise, I assume it is an album that deserves your attention especially in order to clear up if I am wrong or not. Rating: 0.81/1 (09.2)

WILLO'WISP (ITA)-"Unseen" CD'02 (39.10 min, 9 tracks) (BEYOND)

Dark Psychedelic Metal? After so many years of hearing only bands that went with the fashion, here is the chance for me to listen to something else; and to be more precise...it is a return to old glorious times of CYNIC, ATHEIST or SADIST. Therefore, it is a compilation of Heavy, Techno Death and Atmospheric Metal, well structured and performed. As far as the music is concerned, I assume it is OK. Regrettably, the progressive elevation insists too much as it is present on the majority of the tunes, even if the female voice desperately tries to point out the Melodic while the male one outlines a common Death Metal arrangement... Keyboard seems to lead the whole music, although not so originally, and creates for the listener a very comfortable mood. I haven't listened to their former album, "Enchiridion", hence I am not in the position of comparing the quality. I could solely say, so far, that too much of Heavy Metal and Progressive blasts the vigor of extreme Metal I yearned to listen for so long. Otherwise, a pale and slightly undefined album... willowisp@libero.it. Rating: 0.73/1 (31.03)

WINDS (NOR)-"Reflections Of The I" CD'02 (60.31 min, 16 tracks) (THE END)

Well, when thinking of WINDS' lineup... you simply lose control!!! Jan Axel von Blomberg/Hellhammer (ARCTURUS, THE KOVENANT,

MAYHEM), Lars Eric Si (SENSA ANIMA, JACK IN THE BOX), Carl August Tidemann (ex-ARCTURUS, TRITONUS, FLEURETY) and Andy Winter (AGE OF SILENCE)! Besides the classical instruments met at Metal bands (guitars, drums and bass) there are more such as piano, keyboards, violin, viola or cello and a clear voice in Drajevolitch's person (ESPERANZA). It is a super-band, super-music and a super-album! During the tracks we can distinguish various tendencies from Rock or classical music to Progressive, Heavy or Black Metal. They define themselves such as Dark Progressive Classical and it seems like being the most appropriate description of what they actually play. If you listened to their first material, MCD "Of Entity And Mind", then, you must expect for the new tracks to be even more miscellaneous, progressive, even rather more Metal, faster and noisy but as outstanding and charming as ever! When I listen to such inspiration and skillfulness proof... I think it is a real exquisite pleasure to enjoy WINDS and I am afraid that from now on Progressive started to mightily strike me too. "Realization" is a monumental track where the violin creates a symphonic background and the Heavy guitars follow prolonged solos (in VIRGIN BLACK type), voices remind me of Garm (ULVER) while the avant-garde atmosphere carries me into an ARCTURUS dimension yet much more symphonic and classic. Because of listening also to some parts of the new ARCTURUS material, I find myself into an impossible position of precisely comparing since I believe in ARCTURUS' music resemblance yet a little bit more Metal. Anyway, the entire album is constant in sound and it is a kind of bothering the fact they insisted on Progressive tunes as well as on the pale shades of Power, which is quite a discomfort for me. There is an advantage if buying the CD since besides the regular 11 tracks you can also enjoy five tracks representing their debut MCD. If you want to place a limit where one ends and the other begins, without reading on the booklet, well, "Predominance" would wake you up to reality. This is an instrumental one which stands for a reproduction, in a classical version, of Rachmaninov opus. Class, elite, elegance, masterpiece...that should have been all I had to say about WINDS! www.winds.nu. Rating: 0.96/1 (23.02)

WURDULAK(USA)-*"Severed Eyes Of Possession"* CD'02 (37. 45 min, 10 tracks)
(SEASON OF MIST)
"Ceremony In Flames" was this super known Death Metal project's debut, a material that received only positive critiques. Well, indeed, the music we can listen to on this album is of a high quality, all instruments prove fastness, technique and synchronisation. And

how else could have been since the line-up is an exceptional one: Iscariath (IMMORTAL, PAIN), Killjoy (NECROPHAGIA, RAVENOUS), Maniac (MAYHEM), Frediablo (GORELORD), Jehmod (BLOODTHORN), beside Ihizahg and Fug??? I believe these names say all you need to know... and therefore, all who find gratification in brutal Metal full of fast and violent tunes must urgently put your hands on this sample of virtuosity released by the French label! This is real Death Metal featuring two sick voices, Killjoy and Maniac! You can imagine, I myself was quite fascinated and really enjoyed this album and I am sure there is no way for it not to be given the recognition of its value. Well, the cover itself is sick as well and so is the entire design of the booklet while the morbid note is just artist Patrick Tremblay's favourite subject. But I tell you now; this is a first piece of collection for this year as far as first rate pure Death Metal is regarded. Rating: 0.79/1 (17.08)

VATTERING (POL)-*"Human's Pain"* CD'01 (54. 25 min, 14 tracks)
(SEASON OF MIST)
Kill-Slash-Maim!!! Or, in other words, outstanding Death Metal! The Poles have reached already 10 years on Metal stage and, although they play damn' well, they cannot sing their own praises with more than two albums while this is the second one released in 2000 and entitled "Murder's Concept". It is pointless to write again about an album launched on the market in 1998 just because now it is digitally mastered. This is a material which purpose is to be addressed to all true fans of such style but nothing else. I am not touched by this kind of products. Yet, probably the money again... Rating: 0.62/1 (2001)

LATEST REVIEWS

ABORYM-*"With No Human Intervention"* CD'02 (min, tracks)
(CODE666)
This is perhaps the most supported album lately and I think it is because of so many stars that participated at the third chapter of ABORYM, namely: Attila Csihar (TORMENTOR), Nattefrost (CARPATHIAN FOREST), Irrumator (ANAAL NATHRAKH, FROST, MISTRESS), Matt Jerman (VOID/OCD), Sasrof (DIABOLICUM), Bard "Faust" Eithun (ex-EMPEROR, DISSECTION), Nysrok (SATANIK TERRORISTS) and of course Malfeitor Fabban and Seth Teitan. The sick mixture of Black Metal with Industrial probably confers a good sample of fastness and stylistic force since Metal manner is only a simple mark to go on from. I believe it is the most explosive album of the band and in the same time the most avant-garde one...the satanic dimension still is the key element for such concept. Hate,

violence, madness, dynamism and finally chaos!!! This might be the succinct characterization for what you may listen to during these 13 new tracks. Hell on Earth! www.code666.net/aborym Rating: 0.88/1 (30.12)

GOLDEN DAWN(AUT)-*"Masquerade"* CD'03 (37. 16 min, 9 tracks)
(NAPALM)
Stefan's musical project was founded 10 years ago yet one single album was released so far. "The Art Of Dreaming" 1997. I remember Martin Shirenc and Ray Wells (PAZUZU) were very excited about this band and actually they were the ones who financially sustained the debut at their label, Dark Matters. Well, that was all about the band's history. The new material brings and follows a similar orientation with some comments: some melancholic even medieval ones now interrupt Raw Black Metal passages with different voices, from clear warm ones or female vocals till grave voices, screamed and impressive, extremely fast guitars and abundant keyboard, which is a specific instrument for GOLDEN DAWN's sound. In other words, their musical style might be characterized like this: Avantgarde Symphonic Experimental Black Metal. There are some pronounced shades of Gothic Metal, even romantic ones so that, per ensemble, the album seems to be too complex and knotty with such a stylistic variety that actually confuses me much. Otherwise, this has an original presentation and the music is well executed. Rating: 0.81/1 (31.12)

GRAND ALCHEMIST(NOR)-*"Intervening Coma-Celebration"* CD'02 (47. 13 min, 12 tracks)
(SOUND RIOT)
Symphonic Black Metal still is a style that requires and compels high respect. Well, if the band is a Nordic one, any opinion tends to attain a certain touch of adulation. These Norwegians, surprisingly, seem to be very serious having performed 12 various complex dynamic tracks very excellently executed. In other words, there is Black Metal in abundance and the oscillation of melodic and aggressive parts simply is a real great relish just like the vocals' alternation. In the light of what I've said, I guess we can listen to Epic, Progressive, Power, Atmospheric, and Heavy Metal with some classical influences. Everything comes in a bombastic entertaining full of multiple effects manner with an explosive synth much rhythm and melody. I could even say it is like passing through various albums of bands like: LIMBONIC ART, DIMMU BORGIR, SIRIUS or THE KOVENANT. I really enjoyed listening to the album and I appreciate the skillfulness of these young musicians who firstly joined together seven years ago under MORRHEIM banner. Well, I

find disappointing, once again, the lack of originality and have not a proper personal sound. Anyway this is a debut almost successful! www.grandalchemist.com www.soundriotrecords.net Rating: 0.86/1 (30.12)

GRAYSCALE(FIN)-*"When The Ghosts Are Gone"* CD'02 (37. 16 min, 9 tracks)
(SOUND RIOT)
Gothic Metal should be another style that actually enjoys still a huge success on the Metal scene and that is why many and many bands are more attracted to such orientation. EX-FOUR BITCHES have now a sextet formula and mark their debut at the Portuguese label in a pompous manner but with less stylistic strength. If you want To/Die/For, ENTWINE or any other Finnish Gothic Metal projects, all having as basis an AMORPHIS and SENTENCED structure, then GRAYSCALE definitely might please you. Male clear vocals, heavy guitars, a boring battery, intense keyboards, a positive friendly atmosphere and plenty of melody and rhythm...everything is performed in an elegant manner yet perfectly moulded on the up mentioned bands' matrix. This is another fine album, pleasing to the ear of which I really hope not to get lost inside a multitude of similar ones. http://listen.to/grayscale Rating: 0.79/1 (30.12)

V/A-*"Better Undead Than Alive"* DCD'02 (120. 24 min, 24 tracks)
(CODE666)
This version of compilation entitled "The Code666 O.S.T. (Official Sound Track)" seems to be a nice surprise for all interested. In such, the Italian label found an effective way to promote its activity and the bands included in are some of those that had have and will have albums released under Code666 banner. Therefore, you'll find bands like: ENID, MANES, ATROX, ABORYM, NEGURA BUNGET, RAKOTH, EPHEL DUATH, VOID OF SILENCE, DIABOLICUM, HANDFUL OF HATE, AGHORA, UNMOORED, ABORTUS, BLOODSHED, THREE MALDOROR KOLLEKTIVE. The advantage of such compilation is that all tracks are exclusive, never released before on any other material, plus a superb video-clip ("Vazduh") filmed by NEGURA BUNGET in Muntii Transilvaniei, besides other complete information regarding the bands and label. I forgot to mention about AGHORA's live performance in its new line-up and about a surprising contest whose winner can have all items ever (in the past-present and future!!!) produced and released at the Italian label. Well, it is an impressive artistic appearance with so many captivating details, two hours of all kinds of music...nothing else. Well, it is a good start to get familiar with Emi's activity. Rating: 0.84/1 (30.12)

Here we come to an end for a new chapter of what we may name "Kogaionon motion picture". Started later in year 1994, this project was actually released in May 1995 and during the years has embraced many different facets, even changes-over, capital ones... from a status of Xeroxed pages with summary details till this very one you're holding in your hands. There were 432 pages so far... 432 steps towards what is behind Metal scene... no more or less than 432 entrances inside a realm filled with thousands pieces, more or less public, of a puzzle we simply name Metal scene... You had the chance to read... 8 years ago... about bands that nowadays surely are on the top of your preferences, yet by that time they were completely underground... Take a look... LACRIMOSA, MORTIIS, OPETH, THE KOVENANT, THEATRE OF TRAGEDY or MOONSPELL all are places you've already visited throughout "Kogaionon-journey". Of course, there were labels as well like PROPHECY, HAMMERHEART, SUPERNAL or bands that ceased to be as IN THE WOODS..., AGHAST, EVOL, and EMPEROR... You've enjoyed and read, then, about bands that, now, had become anonymous ones, do you remember FLEURETY, NIGHTFALL, and BURZUM? There were bands that always desired to avoid cheap publicity and vulgar popularity... NAERVAER, THY VEILS, MONUMENTUM, DARZAMAT, PENITENT and many others, they had a special room within... and so had bands like SUMMONING, EMPYRIUM, ATARAXIA, DARGAARD, which constantly featured a certain artistic quality... and the list could go on and on...!

"Reviews" at all times represented an elementary subchapter within Kogaionon structure and each time its aim was to reflect as much as possible the real quality of the products.

This is the motion picture... what will be..., we definitely shall see!!

I can only put in the picture my KOGAIONON webzine... if you take a glance once in a while... we could meet each other and maybe you'll find out when we'll meet again within a written formula. It is imperative for you to understand that this activity of mine never intended either to compete with other Metal publications or to gain a large popularity among Metal readers. Its trajectory has always been and forever will a straight conservative one with no trendy influences, no financial vanities or efficient compromises...

Kogaionon was and still is the expression of lonely radical insurrectionists of Metal scene... dedicated to all who became in time captured and guided inside this underground network of weird tunes, from the most aggressive and brutal ones till the thorniest strangest and unbelievable ones. Loyalty, addiction, weakness, delusion, fascination...? This is rhetoric for me... perhaps incomprehensible for you... and indifferent for the rest. Yet, in the end, does it really matter? (15.12)



Issue #1



Issue #2



Issue #3



Issue #4



Issue #5



Issue #6



Issue #7



Issue #8



1. nightingale - alive again



4. madder moriem - deadlands



2. ULVER - LYCKANTROPEN THEMES



2. ulver - lyckantropen

3. star of ash - iter.wator



1. Part IV of the Breathing Shadow series, this highly anticipated album by Dan Swano offers magical tunes for fans of hard rock and melodic metal.

2. ULVER offer the original soundtrack for the Swedish short film Lyckantropen by Steve Ericsson. Expect an exciting blend of experimental soundscapes, dark undertones and haunting passages.

3. The new solo project of Heidi S. Tveitan (Peccatum) with members of Emperor and Ulver offers a poetic and graceful drama with melancholic arrangements by strings, keyboards and voices.

4. Deadlands offers rich stylistical varieties, moody and challenging song structures, extremely unique female vocal renditions, and exceptional guitar arrangements.

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