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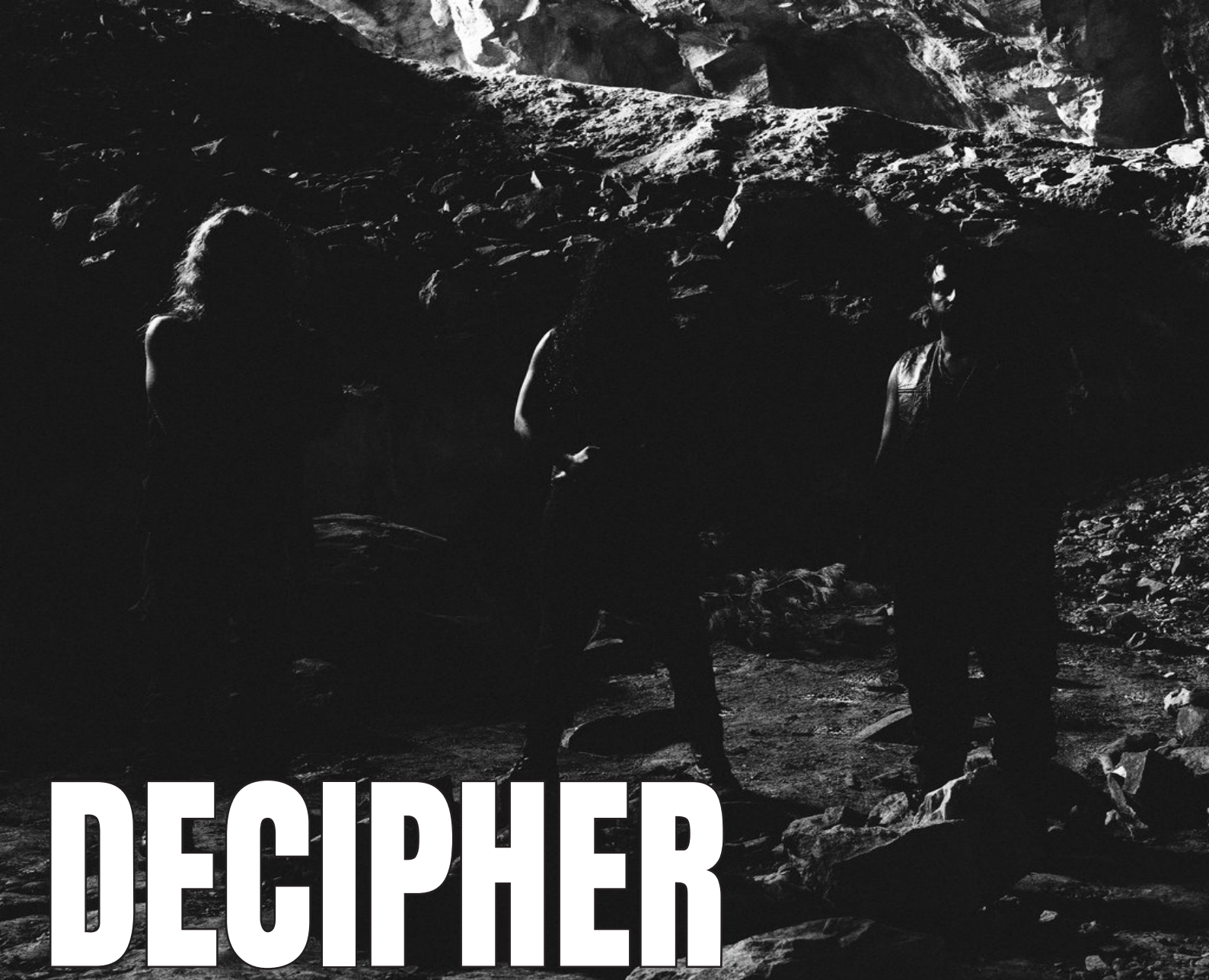
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DECIPHER

DECIPHER are one of the most solid and consistent proposals to have emerged from the Greek black/death metal scene in recent years. With “**ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ**”, their second album, the Athenian band takes a step forward with more mature compositions, more narrative structures and a production handled entirely by the band itself. We spoke with Kostas Gerochristos about the concept, the creative process and a band that carries the mark of its art in every decision it makes.

For those who don't know you yet, could you introduce yourselves? Who are DECIPHER today and what role does each member play within the band?

Decipher are Kostas Gerochristos on guitars and vocals, Dionisis Kiamos on guitars, Kostas Ragiadakos on Bass and Nodas Chatzopoulos on drums.

DECIPHER was born in 2017 and has maintained a very defined direction within black/death metal from the very beginning. What drove the formation of the band and what did you seek to express with it from the outset?

We wanted to play the music we wanted to hear so we formed our own band. From the very beginning, we knew that the band was a way to express ourselves in the best way we could. All this was amplified when we started playing live shows.

Kostas Gerochristos comes from LUCIFER'S CHILD and ex-WARHAMMER, Kostas Ragiadakos from DEPHOSPHOROUS and ex-ABYSSUS, and Nodas Chatzopoulos from ABSENSE. To what extent have those previous trajectories shaped the sound of DECIPHER or, on the contrary, have you deliberately sought to build something different from all of that?

There's nothing deliberate when it comes to the creation of our music. We all come from different backgrounds of music but we also have a lot of common ground. The main goal is that we like what we create, all else is secondary. I'm pretty sure that our involvement in other bands and projects has helped our band to communicate way better on the musical aspect and as humans.

"ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ" arrives three years after "Arcane Paths to Resurrection". How has the band evolved during that time and what fundamental differences do you find between the two records?

I would say that the new record is way more mature and focused compared to the first one. On “**ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ**” we tried to stay more consistent in character from song to song while still expanding the band's “limits” and sound.

Transcending Obscurity describes "ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ" as a record with comparatively longer songs and a more narrative quality than the previous one, without straying from the band's core sound. Do you agree with that reading? Was it a conscious pursuit or simply the natural result of the compositional process?

Well, that was the goal for sure but it

came out in a very natural way. The first four songs were created very fast and then around 2 years later me and Nodas went in the studio to jam on a couple more riffs and all of a sudden we had the next half of the record ready.

The title "ΘΕΛΕΜΑ" refers directly to Aleister Crowley's concept of Thelema, and the lyrics also seem to follow the path set on previous works with references to Crowley and Baudelaire. What role do those references play in DECIPHER's music and how do they translate into the album's texts?

It's all part of our process. I like to write lyrics that can have different meanings depending on one's experiences. This path continues on our third upcoming album. "ΘΕΛΕΜΑ" means "will" in Greek and that's always the only thing that we got left when all else fails.

The production of "ΘΕΛΕΜΑ" was handled by the band itself at The Audiocult Studio in Athens. What was the recording, mixing and mastering process like when the band itself takes full control of all those decisions?

The three of us recorded live in our rehearsal room, a very similar process compared to our first record, and then I took over mixing and mastering. It was very liberating to be able to have total control of the whole production but at the same time you need a lot of time in order to actually be able to judge everything right. Luckily, we have another excellent sound engineer in the band (Kostas Ragiadakos on bass) and his input helped a lot with my final decisions.

The cover bears the signature of Russian artist Artem Grigoryev, who also worked on "Arcane Paths to Resurrection" and has created artwork for NIGHTBRINGER or DÖDSRIT. How did that collaboration come about and what does his work offer that fits with DECIPHER's artistic vision?

It was the natural step to have Artem handle the artwork for "ΘΕΛΕΜΑ" since it's also the continuation of "Arcane Paths..." in a way. His style and ideas can't be replicated by someone else so we really thought it was the best move to continue with someone we knew and trusted.

The album opens with "Return to Naught" and closes with "Litany". How was the structure and running order of the songs decided? Is there a narrative or conceptual arc running through the album from beginning to end?

Ironically, the track's order is very close to the order the tracks were actually composed, if not exactly the same. The same thing happened with "Arcane Paths" as well and that has become one of the main tools I use when I write. One track has to lead to the other and at the same time every track has to be



able to stand on its own. Also, on every record the last song gives way for the first track of the next record. This will happen with the 3rd upcoming album too.

"Hail Death" is one of the standout tracks on the record, with an agonising ending that has even led to a promotional video. Why that particular song to represent the album visually and what did you seek to convey with that video?

We all decided that "Hail Death" was the song that would be able to connect with the visual aspect of the band. The song has many parts and a long narrative so it was the most natural move for us. The song's message is that to free the outer self the inner self must be liberated first.

Greece has an extreme metal scene with enormous historical weight, from the classic ROTTING CHRIST, NECROMANTIA or SEPTIC FLESH to bands that remain active such as KAWIR, VARATHRON or NOCTERNITY. How do you see your position within that scene and what do you feel DECIPHER brings to that legacy?

I believe that is something that only time will be able to answer. We just create and perform the music we love.

Are there plans for live performances to present "ΘΕΛΕΜΑ"? How is DECIPHER on a stage compared to the studio work?

We completed our first tour for 2026 in March and a couple shows in Greece during the summer. Now, we have a long tour planned in October and November with a couple festivals included. We have also started booking for 2027.

Our music is written and performed with the live sound in mind with no extra layers and no backing tracks. So hopefully the audience gets what they listen to in the record, plus some more!

What comes next? Is there any project on the horizon that you can share with us?

Right now, we are finishing the compositions for our next album. There is also a special project coming up, but we can't share much about it yet.

And to close: the stage is yours. What would you like to say to those who do not know DECIPHER yet, to those who have been with you from the beginning, or simply anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

Thank you for your support and we hope to see everyone at a show during our tour in October and November! You can check all our upcoming shows and news at decipherofficial.com. Hails!

INTERVIEW BY: David Déniz Plaza
ANSWERED BY: K. Gerchristos



BANISHER

BANISHER celebrate two decades of career with “Metamorphosis”, their most ambitious and daring work to date. The Polish band from Rzeszów, forged in adversity and battle-hardened through the ranks of DECAPITATED, FLESHGOD APOCALYPSE and DIETH, delivers an album that breaks the mould by incorporating hardcore and crossover elements into their death metal without asking anyone’s permission. We spoke with Hubert Więcek about twenty years of transformation, obstacles and an unbreakable will to keep surprising.

For those who don't know you yet, could you introduce yourselves? Who are BANISHER today and what role does each member play within the band?

Greetings! Banisher AD 2026 are Tomasz Jasiński - vocals, Piotr Kołakowski - bass, Oliver Monticcolo - drums, and the founding father Hubert Więcek - guitars

BANISHER was founded in Rzeszów in 2005 by Hubert Więcek. Twenty years later, the band remains active and has a new album. How would you describe the evolution of BANISHER from those early days to what it is today?

We started as a high school band; I was 17 back then. Throughout 20 years, the band had multiple lineup changes. It's just life: people move away, lose interest, start families, pursue careers in bigger bands, or simply stop playing. How would I describe Banisher now in one sentence? Musically mature, confident, and unafraid to surprise listeners with versatile, eclectic songwriting.

Throughout its history, BANISHER has counted among its ranks members of bands such as DECAPITATED, FLESHGOD APOCALYPSE, BELPHEGOR, VITAL REMAINS or DIETH. How has that

constant flow of top-level musicians influenced the identity and sound of the band?

Significantly...but probably not in the way people might expect—not because we're stealing riffs or trying to sound like those bands. We've all learned so much during all those years in top-level bands. It's like completing a dozen musical electives. You become just a better musician, songwriter, instrumentalist; you get so much experience that if you are good and smart enough, you can channel all of that into something great within your own band.

"Metamorphosis" arrives six years after "Degrees of Isolation". What has happened during that time and how has that distance between records affected the creative process behind the new album?

Well, this is more than complicated, and the whole story would give you a headache. First of all, the pandemic hit exactly 2 weeks after the album's premiere. There was no chance to promote that record, and I was also out of creative mana to write new stuff. Nevertheless, at the end of 2021, we started to write new material with Eugene. We were having Skype sessions, writing drums and doing some riffing. In October and December

2022, we recorded drum parts for 4 songs, which were later released as 3 singles in 2023 and 2024. I also had to find and help a new vocalist settle into the band, which took me 2 years. In the following years, I continued to work on the songs by myself, since Eugene was busy with other bands and had to step back. In the meantime, I started my online guitar school; then there was an almost 2-year chapter where I was busy with Redemptor. In 2023, I joined Dieth, which also took a lot of my time. Finally, in 2025, I managed to work with Michał Łysejko, who is my great friend and bandmate in Dieth (earlier also Decapitated), who helped me out in recording 4 more songs in 2025 and finishing the new album. We were also constantly working on the vocals with Jorgi between 2023 and 2025. In July 2025, I re-recorded all of the guitar parts, and the record was done in September 2025. How did it affect the creative process? Well, over half of the songs were played many more times during the two tours that we did in 2024 and 2025, so they had time to settle, which allowed us to approach the recordings with much more confidence. We've had enough time to prepare and think them through, so every song was complete and recorded exactly as we wanted



The title "Metamorphosis" carries an evident conceptual weight. What does that metamorphosis represent for the band? Does it refer to a musical transformation, a personal one, or something broader?

For us, *Metamorphosis* represents all of those things at once. It reflects two decades of personal growth, the band's musical evolution, and the way the world around us has changed in recent years. The album explores transformation on both an individual and collective level—from overcoming personal struggles and redefining our identity to responding to isolation, uncertainty, and global crises. Musically, it also marks our most adventurous record to date, with new tunings, unconventional guitar work, and a broader sonic palette that mirrors the constant process of change.

BANISHER's lyrical tradition revolves around dreams and nightmares, creating an oneiric atmosphere of bewilderment, fear, despair and anger. How is that thematic universe constructed and where do those references draw from in "Metamorphosis"?

Dreams and nightmares have been our themes since *Oniric Delusions*, but on *Metamorphosis* they are no longer just symbolic—they become inseparable from reality. The album blurs the line between dreams, trauma, memory, guilt, paranoia, and identity, creating a world where recurring nightmares, distorted perception, inner voices, and psychological collapse reflect both deeply personal experiences and the chaos of the world around us. Rather than escaping reality, the oneiric atmosphere exposes it from within.

"Metamorphosis" introduces

Hardcore and Crossover elements within the Death Metal that forms the core of the band, alongside the use of samplers. How did the decision to broaden the sonic spectrum on this record come about and how far did you want to take that experimentation?

Ever since *Degrees of Isolation*, I stopped thinking in terms of, oh, this song has to be brutal, this one has to have technical riffs, or the other way - nah, I can't use this because it's not technical enough. I got bolder in composing, and my main goal was to make every song have an element of surprise. It's boring to have an album with eight songs that all sound the same. It has to be dynamic, fast, slow, brutal, melodic, groovy, aggressive, rhythmically diverse. That's when you keep people's attention. But this is also something that people don't like. A lot of people want la-

bels, easy listening, they want to get exactly what they expect. Unfortunately, the same goes with a lot of bands - they are afraid of experimenting because it's risky, they are afraid of bad comments, losing die-hard fans. We took the risk. The best things are coming out of experimenting and taking risks.

The album featured two different drummers: Eugene Ryabchenko on tracks 1, 3, 6 and 7, and Michał Łysejko on tracks 2, 4, 5 and 8. What was that recording process like and in what way did it influence the final result of the record?

Adding to the previous question - what I love the most is that both Eugene and Michał recorded the songs that they were perfectly suited for - Eugene recorded the fastest and most technical songs, and Michał got the groovy, lumberjack mid-tempo songs. Eugene was recording with me in the studio; Michał was recording remotely in his studio, sending me the work and making adjustments day by day. As you can see, we live in great times for the possibilities of recording music.

The advance singles were "Manifest of Justice" and "Soul Deformed", and an official video was made for "Metamorphosis pt. 2". Why those songs to represent the album and what did you seek to convey with that particular video?

To be precise, we made a video for every song, starting with the singles "Aftermath", followed up by "Born to Die" and "Demons". But those were released with "single" mixes, they were mixed again with the rest of the songs. We wanted to deliver a separate story/video for every song. But our latest video to the song "Metamorphosis pt. 2" was an even bigger production. The video was shot at an abandoned psychiatric hospital, perfectly suiting the atmosphere of the lyrics of the song, where a man whose mind is consumed by a malevolent

force, blurring the line between possession and mental illness.

In 2024 you undertook the Aftermath Tour with twelve shows across Poland, and in 2025 you joined TERRORDOME and DORMANT ORDEAL for the Triple XX Tour, a joint celebration of the twentieth anniversary of all three bands. What did that journey prior to the album's release mean to you?

Actually, the album was supposed to be released on that very tour, but unfortunately it was postponed to January 2026. Anyways, it was really cool to join our brothers in Terrordome and Dormant Ordeal to celebrate a triple 20th anniversary. We've had a great time; it was a great opportunity to play a nice career-spanning setlist from our 20 years of work. Now we are ready to play more shows with the new setlist and the new songs.

BANISHER has spent two decades operating from Rzeszów. Poland has a Death Metal scene of the highest international standing, with bands such as BEHEMOTH, DECAPITATED or VADER. How do you see your position within that ecosystem and what do you feel BANISHER brings that cannot be found in other Polish bands?

Where we come from (as well as Decapitated, Lux Occulta and a few other) - Podkarpacie, the south east region of Poland, there is some kind of weird wildness and darkness that the bands have, that no other bands have. It's like you have Bay Area thrashers, Florida death metal, or NYHC. Growing up in the '90s, after communism, mostly in poverty, there is some kind of weird fury and wild energy that we have here, because we had to struggle and fight with lots of adversities. That forged us in a way, and I sincerely believe that you can find a reflection of this in music.

Selfmadegod Records has been your label for many years now.

What does that long-term relationship with the same label offer you and how has that collaboration evolved over time?

Oh man, SMG is doing a great job for us - we have good promotion, reviews, interviews, also we have beautiful physical releases, limited CD boxes. And we're on the roster alongside some of the best bands in Poland.

Following "Metamorphosis", are there touring or festival plans to present the album live? How is BANISHER on a stage compared to the work in the studio?

We were too late with the release of the album on our 20th anniversary tour, so we are regrouping and planning to hit the road in winter 2026 and spring 2027. In the meantime, I want to start working on the next album. Banisher on stage is an absolutely relentless live act that destroys everything in its path. In the studio, we're absolute workaholics. We keep refining the material until there isn't a single second of our music that any of us has reservations about.

And to close: the stage is yours. What would you like to say to those who have been with you since the early days in Rzeszów, to those discovering you now through "Metamorphosis", or simply anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

Be bold, be perseverant, don't hesitate to experiment and discover new realms of music. That's what we did on our last album, and if you're looking for something fresh, surprising and unconventional in death metal, then you need to check out our latest record. Thanks, vamos!

INTERVIEW BY: David Déniz Plaza
ANSWERED BY: Hubert Więcek



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SUMÉRGETE EN LA OSCURIDAD. SÉ PARTE DEL RITUAL.

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NECROGORE

NECROGORE are three Italian friends who in 2022 decided to do exactly what they wanted: raw, uncompromising old-school death metal. With "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" they present their debut full-length through Awakening Records — a record that asks no permission and owes no explanations.

For those who don't know you yet, could you introduce yourselves? Who are NECROGORE today and what role does each member play within the band?

NECROGORE is an Italian Death Metal band born from the need to create raw, aggressive old-school Death Metal with a strong gore approach. Our main influences come from the European Death Metal scene of the 90s. The band consists of three members, each bringing their own experience, influences and personality into the NECROGORE sound. Every member contributes to the songwriting and overall identity of the band.

NECROGORE was formed in 2022 in Marche, Italy. What led to the formation of the band and what did you seek to express with it from the very beginning?

NECROGORE was born from the meeting of three old friends who were fucking tired of following their old bands and decided to start something new together. The idea was to create a new band with the intention of not repeating the same mistakes of the past and to do things in a different way. The idea originally came from Chris (drums) and Lucas (bass, vocals), who had already played together in previous bands. Later, Alex (guitar) joined the project, completing the lineup and

bringing his own personality and influences into the band.

The name NECROGORE, the logo and the cover of "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" might lead one to think of more extreme sounds such as Brutal Death or Goregrind, yet the music you make is quite far removed from those territories. Was it a conscious decision to create that distance between image and sound, or did each element simply respond to its own criteria?

We don't feel there is such a big distance between the image and the sound, and we don't believe our music is that far removed from those territories. Of course, we like Brutal Death and Goregrind, but we don't play those genres. The logo and the cover perfectly reflect the concept of a Death Metal album. We wanted that kind of artwork because it represents some of the themes we deal with. We don't doubt that the cover can be a punch in the gut for some people, but that was exactly what we wanted. The logo and artwork are also quite far from the visual style usually associated with Goregrind bands. We don't believe they are so far removed from the collective imagery of Death Metal. Or are there some boundaries that we shouldn't cross in Death Metal? We don't think so.

Before the debut you released two EPs, "Digging from Below" in 2023 and "Ancestral Abhorrence" in 2024, as well as a split. How would you describe that early stage and what did it make clear to you about the path you wanted to follow with "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena"?

The first EP represented the band's first phase of finding its identity, with early rehearsals and initial ideas put together quickly, driven by the desire to release our first stuff as soon as possible. With the second EP, we focused more on brutality and personality, trying to make our sound more aggressive and defined. The first ideas for the album were already taking shape at that time, but this short journey helped us make our sound more concrete, combining both phases and leading us exactly towards the sound we wanted for our debut album.

The sound of NECROGORE draws clearly from the Swedish Death Metal of the early nineties, with that characteristic guitar tone achieved with the Boss HM-2 pushed to its limits. To what extent is that a conscious and deliberate influence, and to what extent is it simply the sound that comes out naturally when you get together to play?



We simply like the sound of the Boss HM-2. We don't just draw inspiration from Swedish Death Metal; some people have noticed other influences, while unfortunately others haven't. This choice of guitar tone has led people to mistakenly label us as a band playing classic Swedish Death Metal, a sound that has already been explored many times before. Nowadays, saying that using an HM-2 pedal automatically means drawing from early 90s Swedish Death Metal is too easy and reductive, because over the years many bands from different genres have used the same pedal and created completely different sounds.

However, NECROGORE is not a clone of the Swedish Death Metal sound. There are moments where you come closer to PAGANIZER than to ENTOMBED, combining that sound with classic Death Metal and touches of Crust. How do you yourselves define that balance between influences and your

own identity?

We really appreciate you saying that NECROGORE isn't a clone of the Swedish Death Metal sound. You're also absolutely right when you say that Crust elements are part of our sound, because we draw inspiration from that world as well. We've never tried to create something that has already been done and simply copy it, like a tribute band would do. We have always wanted to take our influences and mix them with our own personality. We're still working on refining that approach, trying to create something that feels even more genuine and personal. Maybe a tribute band would be much more appreciated in our fucking narrow-minded peninsula, but that's not what we are interested in doing.

"Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" opens with an intro that refers directly to the soundtracks of eighties gore films and closes with a cover of the main theme from "The Texas Chainsaw Massa-

cre 2". What role does that cinematic horror aesthetic play in the universe of NECROGORE?

We are huge fans of eighties horror cinema, especially the raw and disturbing atmosphere of gore movies from that era. For us, horror and death metal share the same spirit: creating extreme images, uncomfortable feelings and strong emotions.

The intro and the cover of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2" were not just random choices. The introduction was entirely written and composed by Alex as a prologue to an imaginary horror, where the music is essentially the evocation of an abstract and suspended atmosphere, an intangible reality that gradually introduces the listener to the album and anticipates the sound of the following tracks.

The cover of the main theme from "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2" represents one of the band's sources of inspiration and a passion shared by all members. The choice of this

song was deliberate: we didn't pick one of the most famous and recognizable themes from the most successful horror movies, but rather a track from the first sequel to a true masterpiece, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre". The song, originally composed by Jerry Lambert, was perfect for a reinterpretation by an instrumental trio consisting only of guitar, bass and drums. The real gems are not always found on the surface, and just like with underground music, the horror genre deserves to be explored and appreciated in all its hidden details.

The title track of the album is instrumental. What were you looking for with that decision in a record that is otherwise direct and very vocal?

We felt it was right to create a sort of intermediate moment, something dreamlike, or better nightmareish between the other tracks. The song takes its name from the album title because, through its constant changes in tempo and rhythm, it tells the different phases of a violent process caused by an intangible force. A force that we cannot perceive, but that is able to transform our body and soul into an ectoplasmic mass, feeding on our existence from its very origin and slowly stripping away everything that gives it a concrete form.

"Sulphureal Morbid Corpse" is the longest track on the record, running over six minutes, and introduces a slow section with background keyboards and a certain Death-Doom influence. Is that track a signal of where NECROGORE might head in the future or did it simply respond to the needs of that particular song?

It was a song that came together completely spontaneously. We really liked the opening riff, and it felt natural to develop it in that direction, keeping a slower tempo compared to the other tracks. Interestingly, it was also the first track we wrote for the album. We had no intention of creating a Death-Doom influenced track, but ending it that way felt like the right choice. We then realized that it worked perfectly as the album's epilogue, because it represents the final stage of the path of death that has accompanied us throughout the record.

"Sulphureal Morbid Corpse" also features guest guitar by Patrik Fernlund of GOREMENT. How did that collaboration come about and what does his presence bring to that particular track?

We had met Patrik a few years earlier at a gig where both NECROGORE and DAEMONIAC were playing, and he was also performing there as the second guitarist. While talking with him, we asked if he would like to join us as a special guest, and he immediately accepted. That song was the perfect choice for him.

The cover of "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" bears the signature

"WE REFUSE TO BE PART OF THAT GAME. WE'D RATHER MOVE FORWARD ON OUR OWN TERMS, WITHOUT BEGGING ANYONE FOR A SLOT, DRIVEN ONLY BY PASSION AND BY WHAT THE UNDERGROUND HAS ALWAYS MEANT TO US."

of Paolo Girardi, also responsible for artwork for REVOCATION, DEPRIVITY or THE BLACK DAHLIA MURDER. How did the process of finding him come about and to what extent was the band involved in the artistic direction?

The album cover was painted by the mighty Paolo Girardi, because even being a great and well-known artist, he is also a friend of ours. He lives very close to the area where we are based, so we decided to ask him to create the artwork for our debut album, trusting his artistic vision and incredible skills.

The idea came from Alex, with the intention of creating something immediately impactful that could reflect the title and concept of the album. A decomposing corpse, violated and consumed by green slime, with an ethereal entity emerging from it, seemed to us like the perfect representation of what we wanted to express.

The album is released through Awakening Records. How did that relationship come about and what does the label offer that fits with what NECROGORE is?

We were contacted by Awakening Records in 2024, when we only had one finished song and a few rough ideas, so we threw ourselves into the writing process. We were already familiar with Awakening Records because they had released several albums that we love and proudly have in our own collections. Their catalog includes some truly incredible releases, and we already knew the way they worked and the quality of everything they put out. That gave us a great deal of confidence and pride, allowing us to take the time we needed to make the album exactly the way we wanted it.

Italy is not exactly the first country that comes to mind when talking about old-school Swedish-style Death Metal. How do you see the Death Metal scene in Italy today and what place does NECROGORE occupy within it?

Italy isn't exactly the best country for metal in general. However, it has had a huge impact on Brutal Death Metal over the years, and there are still many great bands around today. Things have become much more difficult if you decide to play old-school Death Metal nowadays.

We don't believe NECROGORE occupies any particular position within the scene, and honestly, we don't really care. Nowadays we just see the same handful of bands everywhere, relying on booking agencies to secure spots at festivals and shows, while many others never get a real chance to play. This has been going on for years, and it's slowly killing the underground scene. We refuse to be part of that game. We'd rather move forward on our own terms, without begging anyone for a slot, driven only by passion and by what the underground has always meant to us.

Are there plans for live performances to present "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena"? What is NECROGORE like on a stage?

No plans. We only play when we're invited to gigs, accepting the ones which better fits to us, and we try to promote the album as best we can on those occasions. In live shows, we simply reproduce what you hear on the album. No samples or backing tracks, no stage gimmicks, no theatrical performances, no puppets, no makeup, no fake blood... We leave that kind of bullshit to cosplayers and clowns.

And to close: the stage is yours. What would you like to say to those who do not know you yet, to those who have been with you since the early EPs, or simply anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

First of all, we'd like to thank David Déniz and NECROMANCE DIGIMAG for this interview, and we also want to thank everyone who reads it. Of course, thanks also to everyone who has supported NECROGORE or will support us in the future. Everyone who takes the time to listen to us, buy some records or merchandise is important to us. For those who don't know us, you can find us on Bandcamp, Spotify and various social media. If you're looking for something polished, new, trendy or overproduced, you probably won't find it here. We're just three assholes playing raw old school Death Metal the way we like.

INTERVIEW BY: David Déniz Plaza
ANSWERED BY: Necrogore

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CULTIST



CULTIST are a Canadian death metal band from Calgary who have been building their own sound since 2015, somewhere between the brutal, the atmospheric and the occult. With “Spiritual Atrophy”, their second album, they take a step forward with a more direct and aggressive approach, backed by the addition of guitarist Betzi Poitras and released through Awakening Records. We spoke with Jim Petigo about the record, their conceptual universe and the band’s plans ahead.

To begin, how are you all doing right now? Please introduce yourselves to the readers of NECROMANCE and tell us how the band is feeling at this stage.

Readers of Necromance! We are Cultist and we play death metal. We’re doing great. We’re just finalizing some tour dates and very excited to get out to play some damn music!

Cultist was formed back in 2015 in Calgary, originally driven by drummer Jim Petigo’s vision, later releasing early demos like Cosmic Tomb (2018) and the split A Pact From the Grave (2019). Could you walk us through those formative years and how those early recordings shaped the identity that eventually led to Manic Despair?

I (Jim Petigo) met the other founding members, MG and BS in Vancouver. They were friends of friends, and we started jamming about a week after we got back to Calgary. Vanessa and I had talked about starting a band for a couple years at that point, but nothing ever came of that, and we asked her to join as a vocalist. Our songwriting process has always been a very collaborative affair, but between our beginnings and the writing of Manic Despair, we streamlined things quite a bit. Instead of lone sections being written specifically for use in a partially written song, like we used to, we started writing songs individually and getting the rest of the members to write their own parts for them. Some songs are written drums first, some bass first, some guitar first. That’s since become a large part what makes Cultist sound the way we do.

Your debut full-length Manic Despair (2022) dealt heavily with themes of mental illness and internal collapse. Looking back, how do you feel that album positioned Cultist within the Canadian Death Metal scene?

I like to believe it made a decent impact. We’ve had a very positive reception to it, and a lot of Canadian bands have welcomed us to join them in sharing the stage. Unfortunately, we didn’t get much touring done for Manic Despair predominantly because of lineup instability, which is quite a hindrance for improving our reputation across Canada, but we’re working to rectify that, with some of the tours we’re cu-

rrently booking. Our guitarist from 2020 to 2022, Joe Pacentrilli (who is still a good friend of ours,) got cold feet with the position, and that left us in a difficult position for booking things in advance.

Moving into Spiritual Atrophy, the shift is immediate: more riff-driven, more direct, more aggressive. What triggered this evolution in your sound and approach? Was it a conscious decision or something that emerged naturally during writing?

We went in with a plan this time. We wanted it to be very fast and aggressive. Where Manic Despair took its time and stretched its legs, Spiritual Atrophy goes for the throat. Comparatively simpler, and less showy, though I think we went a little bit too simplified.

Betzi Poitras’ incorporation on guitars has clearly impacted the album’s identity, bringing sharper, more memorable riffing. How did her arrival influence the writing sessions and the overall chemistry within the band?

Betzi is a very natural fit. She joined, and was very quick to learn all the songs, and get on the same page as us. We as a band, are very rhythm section forward, which leaves our guitarist to find their own way to shine, and Betzi has figured that out wonderfully.

Compositionally, Spiritual Atrophy feels tighter, more focused, yet still atmospheric when needed. How did you approach the songwriting this time around compared to Manic Despair? Were there specific goals or intentions you set for yourselves?

Sort of. We started writing it, intending it be faster, but still have that Bolt Thrower style groove, which I don’t think we achieved as fully as we wanted to.

Sonically, the album leans into a raw, organic production—crunchy guitars, present bass, and a natural drum sound that sometimes feels intentionally chaotic. What was the production philosophy behind Spiritual Atrophy, and how satisfied are you with the final mix?

There weren’t any significant changes in terms of production philosophy. For everything that we do, we like to incorporate our band philosophy. “Everyone in CULTIST is equally

important, all voices are heard, and no two songs sound the same.” As far as being satisfied with the final mix, not quite. I think it overall needs more bass.

The triple vocal attack is one of your trademarks. On this album, the interplay between gutturals, rasps, and layered pressure feels more deliberate. How do you coordinate vocal roles, and what were you aiming for vocally on this record?

Whoever ends up taking the lead for lyrics usually gives a vocal pattern, and will ask someone else to switch for another part, and we try to do it all equally. As far as our intentions with vocals go, Manic Despair was mostly Vanessa on vocals, and we wanted to add some more dynamics by sharing the work.

Lyrically and conceptually, Spiritual Atrophy draws from your personal experiences with occultism, continuing the tradition of dark, introspective themes. Could you expand on the conceptual backbone of the album and how these ideas shaped the music?

About a year after the release of Manic Despair, Vanessa and Jim were brainstorming ideas for lyrical themes what we had next. Vanessa suggested occultism, and that worked well for Betzi and I because we have both been occult ritual practitioners at some point. I don’t perform ritual magick these days, so I presented a loose rise and fall concept of my occult interest and experience.

“Coursing Between Worlds” is about what is probably the most common occult experience, which is messing around with ouija boards.

“Neophyte” is about trying rituals for the first time, and all the stuff I got wrong, and how daunting some of the books can be.

“Reality Shaper” is about the peak of my ritual performance, mostly doing Chaos Magick, and some of the fun things I experienced in doing it.

“Phenomena” is about seeing signs that what you’re doing is working, but also seeing that the entities you’re invoking have a will of their own.

“Ascension” is an outlier, cause it’s not directly about my experience, but is about how I interpret something written by Helena Blavatsky.

“False Prophet” is about falling out of love with it, after learning more about certain occult figures and

their lives. I have no doubt that Aleister Crowley was a true believer. He was also incredibly abusive and manipulative and ya know... it doesn't need to be that way.

"Spiritual Atrophy" is about the abandonment of practice and about me wondering whether or not I'm better off for having tried and stopped.

Tracks like "Reality Shaper," "Neophyte," and "Ascension" show different facets of your sound—from dissonant riffing to progressive structures and chaotic solos. Which song best represents the new era of Cultist, and why?

In my opinion, "Reality Shaper". It was the first song written for the album, and showcases a lot of what makes us, us. It's intense, it's weird, it's jagged and unusual, but it flows naturally, which is a great representation of us as a band. We're intense, weird, but make things flow naturally.

With the album now out through Awakening Records and a vinyl edition via Futhark Records, what expectations do you have for Spiritual Atrophy? Are there plans for live shows, further releases, or new collaborations in the near future?

We're going to be touring through our neighbouring provinces shortly, and trying to play in places that aren't Calgary as much as we can. We're starting to figure out a tour of Canada's eastern provinces, Quebec, Ontario, maybe we'll hit the coastal areas too, we haven't decided yet.

To wrap things up on a lighter note: if Cultist had to summon an eldritch entity to bless your future tours, rehearsals, or studio sessions... which one would you choose, and what offering would you bring to avoid immediate dismemberment?

Shub-Niggurath. I'm a big Lovecraft fan, so I think I could siphon off just a little bit of her energy to help channel and direct the otherworldly madness that she exudes. I know I'll need it. As for what I'd offer him.... It's gotta be a goat. She's the Black Goat of a Thousand Young, so might as well lean into that and hope she wants one of those.

And finally, any last words for the NECROMANCE readers?

To all you fine folks who read NECROMANCE..... Thank you, and CHEERS!

INTERVIEW BY: Luis Martínez
ANSWERED BY: Jim Petigo



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URAL

URAL are an Italian thrash crossover band formed between Piedmont and the Aosta Valley, making their NECROMANCE debut with their new album "Anthropic Genetic Involution". A record that blends aggression, technicality and dissonance with an unmistakable Bay Area energy, proving that the band has no fear of surprising their listeners.

To begin, this is URAL's first appearance in NECROMANCE. Could you briefly introduce yourselves to our readers and describe what defines the band's identity at this stage of your career?

We are an Italian thrash metal band formed in the area between Piedmont and the Aosta Valley. Our sound blends thrash, hardcore punk, and dissonant guitars; we aim to combine aggression with technicality.

This new album feels like your most ambitious and sharpened work to date. At what point during the writing process did you realise that "Anthropic Genetic Involution" would mark a turning point for URAL?

To be honest, we never viewed this album as a turning point, but rather as a creative necessity: we changed guitarists two years ago, and the new guy brought fresh ideas, so we all felt the need to write a new album.

Davide Billia's production achieves a clear, cutting and forceful sound without losing the rawness essential to your crossover roots. What specific guidelines did you give him to strike that balance between technical precision and old-school grit?

Davide is a friend as well as a producer, so he knows us inside out; he knows exactly what to do to bring out the best in our sound. Whenever we're in the studio, we analyse many parts together with him — you could say he's the sixth member of the band.

"Extreme Paranoia" opens the album with immediate adrenaline and a strong Bay Area spirit. Why did you choose this track as the introduction to the record, and what role does it play within the album's overall structure?

"Extreme" is the ideal starting

point, as it reflects the insatiable desire to make money and to appear different from who we really are. The album addresses the theme of human regression, making the track perfect for kicking off this journey.

Tracks like "God of Lies" incorporate more angular, dissonant riffing, even hinting at a Voivod-like approach. How did this shift towards less linear structures emerge, and what were you aiming to express through these more unpredictable elements?

We wanted it to sound exactly like that; after the initial fury, we aimed for a sound that was as angular and geometric as possible. We're happy with the comparison to VOIVOD's sound; they are a seminal band for us, and when we compose, we often try to incorporate that kind of sound.

Andrea's vocal performance shows greater versatility, adding nuances and modulations not as present in previous releases. Was this a conscious decision from the outset, or did it evolve naturally as the compositions became more varied?

Yes, it was a conscious choice; we didn't want the vocals to sound the way they did on the previous album, so we approached the vocal work differently to create variety. Andrea is a very versatile singer — he played in heavy and hard rock bands before URAL, so we have plenty of options in that regard.

"Wrong Children" stands out as one of the most technical and frenetic pieces on the album, packed with tempo changes and layered riffs. What challenges did this track pose during composition and recording, and how did you ensure it remained cohesive

despite its density?

It was the track that gave us the hardest time during recording, but thanks to Davide's work and the various ideas that emerged in the studio, we managed to shape it. We envisioned a frenetic, driving interplay between the guitar and vocals in the middle section; Andrea plays with the number 5 mentioned in the lyrics, creating a sort of countdown where the drums and guitars race along independently of the vocals. In the end, we managed to pull off exactly what we wanted both live and on the record.

In contrast, songs like "Open Scars" and "Wasteland" opt for more direct structures and mid-tempo riffing. Did you deliberately seek this balance to allow the album to breathe and avoid overwhelming the listener with constant complexity?

Exactly. The songs were composed in a different order; we tried to structure the tracklist so as not to overwhelm the listener, while still allowing them to appreciate the variety of our sound.

The inclusion of "Flat Black", a jazz-metal reinterpretation of J.J. Johnson, is bold and unexpected. How did this idea originate, and what interested you in exploring such an unconventional piece within a predominantly aggressive record?

The idea came from Stefano; he played bass in a jazz band for years and remains a fan of the genre. He wanted to surprise the listener with something completely different, without abandoning the thrash style, though. At first, it seemed crazy to us, but after working on it for a few days, we became convinced that it had to be done.

The final section, with "Terror Eyes" and "...to Change Your Vision", closes the album with both ferocity and atmosphere. What narrative or emotional function does this ending serve, and how did you decide on this particular sequence?

The track tells the story of Edmund Kemper and how his madness stemmed from the abuse he suffered at the hands of his mother; the album then concludes by addressing the issue of mental health within the family and the problems that dysfunctional families can create. We wanted to convey the heaviness of Kemper's story through the guitars — an aspect on which we focused most of our efforts. It is one of our favourite tracks on the album.



In our review we noted that, despite the clear evolution, there is a risk of remaining in a comfort zone unless you further explore the progressive influences hinted at in this album. Do you see yourselves expanding that side of your sound in future releases?

Absolutely! We've never liked standing still in the same place; the "comfort zone" is a concept light-years away from the URAL philosophy. That's a great question, because right now we're changing our songwriting process again to avoid repeating ourselves. We're building the new tracks starting with vocals and drums rather than guitars, but that's confidential information — you'll find out more with the next album.

The album strikes a balance between tradition and evolution, between crossover energy and technical thrash complexity. How do you manage this duality internally to ensure URAL continues to sound like URAL without repeating yourselves?

We've never liked standing still in the same place; the "comfort zone" is a concept light-years away from the URAL philosophy. That's a great question, because right now we're changing our songwriting process again to avoid repeating ourselves. We're building the new tracks starting with vocals and drums rather than guitars, but that's confidential information — you'll find out more with the next album.

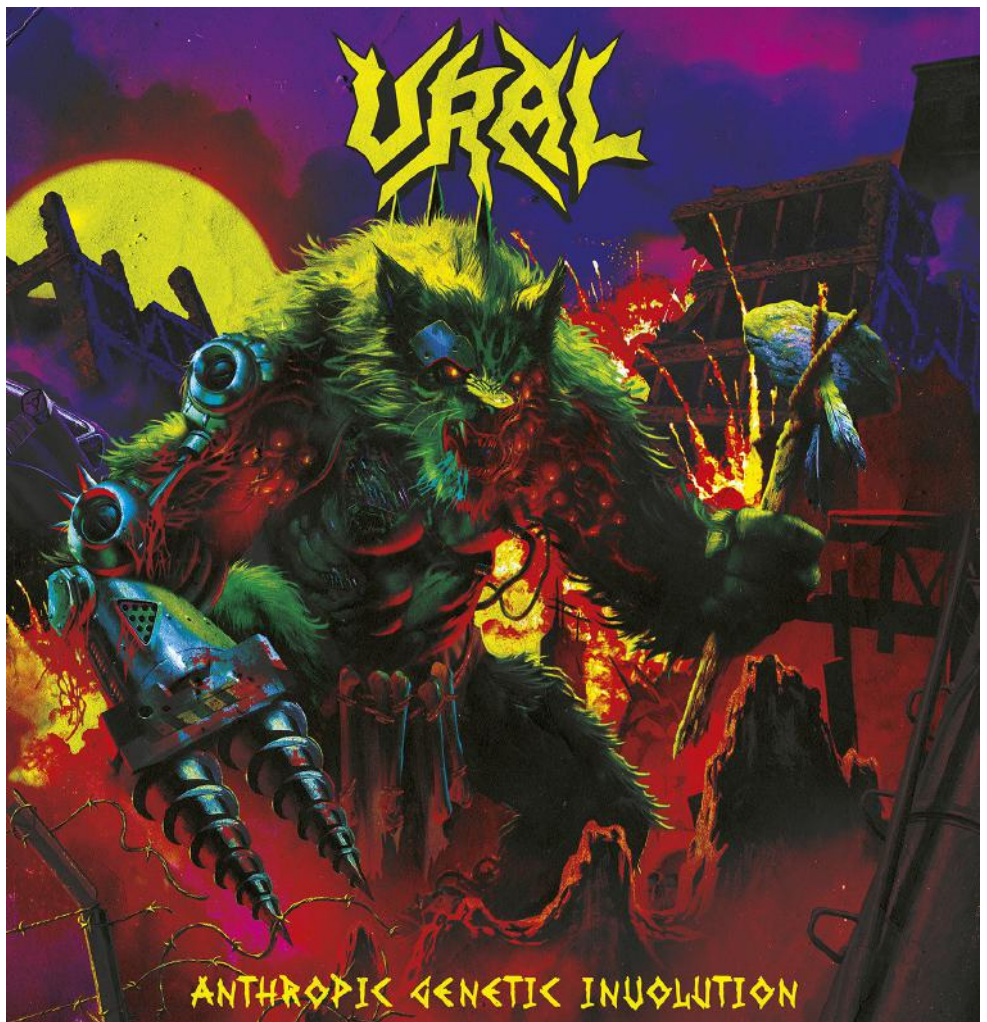
Looking towards the stage: which tracks from "Anthropic Genetic Involution" do you expect to become essential in your live set, and what makes them particularly effective in a concert environment?

For the time being, we've decided to include "Extreme Paranoia", "Break the Fall", "Rat in a Cage" and "Terror Eyes", and all these tracks are taking the show to the next level. The audience response has been fantastic, and we might add the other songs to future shows.

To close the interview, could you share a final message, anecdote or thought for NECROMANCE readers and for those discovering URAL through this new album?

We can't wait to see you down by the stage and share our thrash crossover sound with as many people as possible; we absolutely love the genre and want to keep growing our pack! Follow the werewolf!

INTERVIEW BY: Luis Martínez
ANSWERED BY: Ural



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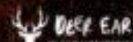
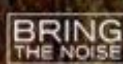
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SLAUGHTERDAY make their NECROMANCE debut with “Dread Emperor”, their most brutal and cohesive work to date. The German old-school death metal band delivers an album that balances filth, atmosphere and punch without sacrificing the identity that has defined them for over fifteen years. We spoke with them about the creative process, their influences and why death metal doesn’t need to follow anyone’s script.

This is the first time SLAUGHTERDAY appears in NECROMANCE, so let’s start properly: how are you doing, and who currently forms the band, both in the studio and on stage?

We’re doing well, thanks. At the core, SLAUGHTERDAY is still Bernd Reiners and me. I handle guitars and bass, while Bernd takes care of drums and vocals. That’s the lineup behind the studio recordings so far. Live, the band has grown considerably. Tobias Koops is now a permanent member on guitar, alongside Andre Janssen on drums and Christian “Lommer” Wiesener on bass. So the current live lineup is Bernd on vocals, Andre on drums, Lommer on bass, Tobias on guitar and me on guitar. We’re also open to having Andre and Lommer involved in the studio in the future. Nothing has been decided yet, but it’s definitely an interesting possibility. After more than fifteen years of doing most things ourselves, having a few extra people to blame when something goes wrong could be quite refreshing.

Your new album Dread Emperor is presented as your most brutal and cohesive work to date. At what point during the writing or

recording process did you realise the album was shaping up to be a significant step forward within your established formula?

I think we realised it fairly early during the songwriting process, although it wasn’t something we consciously planned. The songs simply started developing a certain consistency and atmosphere that felt different from the previous albums. At the same time, we didn’t want to abandon what makes SLAUGHTERDAY sound like SLAUGHTERDAY. The basic ingredients are still there: old-school death metal, strong riffs, melody and atmosphere. But on Dread Emperor we focused the songwriting more. The songs became more direct and easier to follow, and we paid more attention to how they would work in front of a live audience. We wanted the riffs and structures to have an immediate impact on stage, rather than simply working well on record. The real confirmation came when we had the complete album in front of us. It felt much more cohesive than we had initially expected. Rather than thinking, “Okay, this is a significant step forward,” it was more a case of realizing that the songs had naturally taken us somewhere new without losing the identity of the band. So

there was no dramatic moment in the studio where someone dropped a microphone and shouted, “Gentlemen, we have a masterpiece.” It was a gradual realization.

The official infosheet highlights that the Lovecraftian imagery on Dread Emperor is used as a metaphor for contemporary themes, rather than as simple pulp horror. Could you expand on this reinterpretation and explain how it fits into the album’s conceptual framework?

Actually, I wouldn’t describe Dread Emperor as primarily a Lovecraft-inspired record. There are certainly some Lovecraftian elements in the imagery, but the horror on this album comes from a much broader range of influences. We have always been interested in different forms of horror — from classic literature and old horror movies to more obscure and atmospheric ideas. What connects the songs is less a particular fictional universe and more the way horror can be used to deal with themes such as fear, oppression and abuse of power. Sometimes the inspiration is very clearly rooted in horror fiction, while in other cases the imagery is more symbolic. That also fits the title Dread Emperor. It

suggests something powerful and threatening, but it doesn't refer to one specific character or story. The album is more a collection of different horror scenarios and ideas that share a certain atmosphere. So I wouldn't say we set out with a specific Lovecraftian concept. It's more that we use horror as a language. Sometimes there are monsters, sometimes there are humans who are considerably worse.

The opening track "Enthroned" and the closing track "Dethroned" create a clear narrative arc. What does this cycle represent within the album, and how does it reflect the themes you wanted to explore?

"Enthroned" is actually an instrumental, so there isn't a specific story being told in the opening track. But the title fits the framework of the album very well. Together with "Dethroned" at the end, it creates the impression of a rise and a fall — being enthroned and eventually being dethroned. We liked the idea of using these two titles to frame the record without making the album a continuous concept story. The songs in between deal with different horror-inspired themes and ideas, but there are recurring subjects such as fear, domination, oppression and the abuse of power. So "Enthroned" and "Dethroned" are more of a conceptual frame than two chapters of a narrative. The instrumental opening sets the atmosphere, while "Dethroned" brings the album to its conclusion. The cycle is there, but we deliberately leave the details open to interpretation. And

fortunately, nobody had to write an entire plot about an emperor. We're a death metal band, not Netflix.

Musically, the record maintains your trademark approach: morbid riffing, doom-laden passages and a balance between old-school filth and modern clarity. What were you aiming for in terms of sound, and how did you work on the dynamics to keep the album heavy yet breathable?

The main goal was to keep the sound recognisably SLAUGHTERDAY, but make it more focused and powerful. We didn't want to polish away the rough edges that are part of our sound, but at the same time we wanted enough clarity for the riffs, melodies and different layers to come through. A big part of that was the dynamics of the songs themselves. We deliberately worked with contrasts: fast and aggressive parts alongside slower, doom-laden sections, and more atmospheric passages between the heavier riffing. The quieter or more spacious moments are important because they give the really heavy parts more impact when they come back in. We also wanted the album to translate well to the stage. The riffs need to work as riffs, not just as layers buried somewhere in a dense production. That was an important consideration when arranging the songs. So the idea was not to make everything louder, heavier and more compressed. It was more about giving the music enough room to breathe while still sounding dirty and powerful. There's no point in having a huge wall of sound

if you can't find the bricks anymore.

Once again, you recorded at Soundlodge with Jörg Uken. What does Uken bring to your sound that makes him the right choice for SLAUGHTERDAY? How detailed or demanding are you when it comes to mixing and mastering?

Jörg knows the band very well by now, and that's probably the most important thing. We've worked with him on several records, so he understands what SLAUGHTERDAY is supposed to sound like without us having to explain every little detail from scratch. At the same time, he doesn't simply reproduce the previous albums. We give him a clear idea of what we want, but we also trust his experience and ears. He knows how to get the necessary clarity and punch without taking away the raw character of the music. We are quite particular about the mix, especially when it comes to the guitars, drums and the overall balance. We want to hear the individual instruments, but we don't want a sterile production. The music still has to feel organic and a little dirty. As for mastering, we're not interested in making the record as loud as physically possible. Dynamics are important to us, particularly because the songs contain quite a few changes between fast, slow and atmospheric sections. Jörg knows where we're coming from, so the process is usually more about fine-tuning than fighting over every half-decibel.

SLAUGHTERDAY operates as a duo in the studio but becomes a





full band live. How does this duality influence your songwriting, and what challenges or advantages does it create when translating the material to the stage?

The fact that SLAUGHTERDAY started as a two-person studio band definitely influences the songwriting. Bernd and I have been working together for a long time, so there is a very direct way of writing. We usually bring the riffs and basic song ideas, and develop the arrangements from there. There's no need to involve five people just to decide whether a riff should be repeated another time. The challenge comes when you take those recordings onto the stage. Some things that work perfectly in the studio don't necessarily work in exactly the same way live. It's not easy to reproduce the arrangements properly and, at the same time, the songs have a different energy when they are played by a full lineup. It also affects how we write new material. We are increasingly thinking about how a song will feel live while we're arranging it. Not in the sense of writing specifically for the stage, but we want the riffs and structures to be playable and immediately effective in front of an audience.

Tracks like "Obliteration Crusade", "Astral Carnage" and "Dethroned" have already been highlighted as standout moments. What can you tell us about these songs specifically, and what elements do you feel make

them particularly representative of Dread Emperor?

Those three songs show quite different sides of Dread Emperor, which is probably why they work well as examples of the album. "Obliteration Crusade" is one of the more direct and aggressive tracks, but it also has a very groovy, almost classic Autopsy-style refrain. That gives the song a strong hook without making it feel too polished or predictable. It's a good example of how we tried to make the riffing more focused and immediate on this record. "Astral Carnage" is atmospheric, but it's also fast and has a certain punk vibe to it. That combination is important because we didn't want the atmospheric elements to automatically mean slow or doom-laden. The song has a lot of movement and energy, while still creating that slightly eerie atmosphere we like. "Dethroned" is probably the biggest departure from what we have done before. It has strong punk influences and is much more catchy and direct than people might expect from SLAUGHTERDAY. At the same time, it still sounds like us, which was the interesting part. It closes the album and connects back to "Enthroned", but musically it goes somewhere we hadn't really gone before. So these three tracks represent different aspects of Dread Emperor: the old-school groove of "Obliteration Crusade", the atmospheric speed and punk influence of "Astral Carnage", and the more unexpected, catchy approach of "Dethroned". That

variety is actually one of the things I like most about the record.

You included a cover of "Golem" by PROTECTOR, a direct nod to the German Death Metal legacy. Why did you choose this track, and what does it mean to you within the context of the album?

"Golem" is a very personal choice for me. I discovered the song when it originally came out in the 1980s. A friend of mine gave me the tape, and I remember being really impressed by the song and by PROTECTOR in general. So this isn't a case of digging through old records years later and deciding, "That would make a good cover." I've known the song for most of my life. PROTECTOR were an important part of the early German Death/Thrash Metal scene, and "Golem" has exactly the kind of raw, straightforward energy that we still appreciate today. When we decided to record a cover, it was one of the songs that immediately came to mind. We also didn't want to completely reinvent it. The original has a great character, so our main aim was to play it as SLAUGHTERDAY while keeping the spirit of the song intact. And it fits the album quite naturally. Dread Emperor has a lot of different horror influences, and the Golem is another classic figure that belongs perfectly in that world. For me, though, the personal connection is probably the most important reason we chose it. It's a small piece of my own history with Metal.



Your influences—AUTOPSY, DEATH, MASSACRE, CELTIC FROST, BOLT THROWER—are clearly present, yet always integrated with personality and intent. How do you manage the balance between homage, identity and evolution without falling into mere imitation?

I think the most important thing is that these bands are not influences we consciously try to imitate. We've been listening to them since we were teenagers, so their music has simply become part of our musical vocabulary. If you write and play Death Metal for decades, some of those things are inevitably going to come out in your own riffs. At the same time, we don't sit down and say, "Let's write an AUTOPSY riff here" or "This needs a bit more CELTIC FROST." That would probably become obvious very quickly. The goal is to take the things we like — certain riffing, moods, grooves or approaches to songwriting — and combine them with our own ideas. I also think limitations can actually help. We have never been interested in becoming technically flashy just for the sake of it. We prefer memorable riffs, atmosphere and songs that have a certain character. That naturally keeps the music connected to the old-school tradition while still allowing us to develop. And after all these years, I hope we have developed enough of our own bad habits to call them a style.

The infosheet describes Dread

Emperor as a "healthy antidote to stereotypes" within Death Metal's own imagery. Which stereotypes were you aiming to challenge or dismantle, and how is that reflected in the music and lyrics?

I think the main stereotype we wanted to avoid is that Death Metal has to be either extremely brutal and technical or completely obsessed with gore and shock value. Those elements can certainly be part of the genre, but they are hardly the only things you can do with it. With Dread Emperor, we wanted to explore a broader range of horror and darker themes. The lyrics deal with things like fear, oppression, abuse of power and the darker sides of human behaviour, but we approach them through different horror-inspired ideas rather than simply describing violence and gore. Musically, we also allowed ourselves to move around a little more. There are fast and aggressive songs, but also atmospheric passages, doom-influenced sections, punk elements and more melodic or catchy moments. "Dethroned", for example, is probably not the song someone would expect if they only knew SLAUGHTERDAY from our earlier records. So I wouldn't say we deliberately tried to destroy Death Metal stereotypes. We simply wanted to use the genre without feeling obliged to tick every traditional box. Death Metal already has a very strong vocabulary — there's no reason why we can't add a few words of our own.

To wrap things up, could you share a funny, unusual or memorable anecdote related to SLAUGHTERDAY or the recording of Dread Emperor? And of course, we'd appreciate some final words for the readers of NECROMANCE.

One thing that comes to mind is how unspectacular some of the most important moments in making a record actually are. With Dread Emperor, there wasn't one huge disaster or some legendary recording-session incident. A lot of it was Bernd and me sitting around, working on riffs, changing arrangements and discussing whether a part really needed to be there — sometimes for far longer than two people probably should. But seriously, it's great to see the songs develop from something that started between two people in a rehearsal room into a full band on stage. That's probably the most rewarding part of the whole thing. Thanks to everyone at NECROMANCE for giving SLAUGHTERDAY some space in the magazine, and thanks to everyone who has supported us over the years. If you haven't heard Dread Emperor yet, give it a spin — preferably loud enough to annoy at least one neighbour. And if you already have it, thank you for listening. We'll see you somewhere on stage.

INTERVIEW BY: Luis Martínez
ANSWERED BY: Slaughterday

REVIEWS



ABUSER (PL) Blood Marks

Xtreem Music, 2026

"Blood Marks" is the debut of the Polish band **ABUSER**, which comes to market through the Madrid-based label Xtreem Music. It is a quartet formed by Pawel (vocals and guitars), Michal (bass), Klimek (drums) and Albert (guitars). It was founded in the city of Wroclaw in 2018 and, as we shall see below, dedicates itself to Thrash Metal in its most brutal and aggressive version, although of above all American descent (DEMOLITION HAMMER, old MORBID SAINT, SADUS...), not so much German, as one might think given its proximity (although there are elements of the old KREATOR).

In this work we find 10 tracks in just over 36 minutes, which indicates to us, from the outset, that we are not dealing with music characterized precisely by its complexity and long duration. On the contrary, the tracks are fairly short, with the exception of "Cry of the Innocent", "Abuser" and "Fin de Siècle", which exceed four minutes. To this must be added their hard-hitting quality, speed and aggression. **ABUSER**, in a few words, dedicates itself to a "brutish" Thrash to which, at one moment or another, a few drops of Death are added. However, the songs contained in "Blood Marks" are not, fortunately, linear, but rather incorporate, above all the longer ones, tempo changes that break their main development and invite headbanging (when shifting to mid-tempos), as occurs, for example, in the title track "Blood Marks". The aforementioned "Fin de Siècle" somewhat departs from the general line of the recording, moving more at mid-tempo and proving somewhat more technical. In the rest, although there are tracks that begin somewhat held back, such as "Suspended in Torture" and "Lethal Obsession", **ABUSER** dishes out real punishment from

beginning to end.

Moving to the instrumental section, it must be said that the work of Pawel and Albert on guitars is very good and effective. Obviously, the music of **ABUSER** does not lend itself to many technicalities and complexities, but this style is based on the simple and hard-hitting. And so it is: the guitars dish out throughout the entire recording fast, sharp, sometimes hammering riffs, with short and swift solos. The bass, the usual great sacrifice in this music, is audible and has its moment of prominence, as we can hear in "Blood Marks". The drums, both for their production and their place in the mix and for the style that Klimek imprints on them, are a key element in the aggression of **ABUSER**: they are fast, but do not go at a fixed pace (the typical boom-boom), by habitually employing rolls and other "original" touches for what is normal in this style. For his part, the vocal style of Pawel fits perfectly within the music of **ABUSER**, as it is furious and aggressive, recalling quite strongly that of Mille Petrozza (KREATOR).

In sum, **ABUSER** is a good band and "Blood Marks" a good record. There is nothing new, but rather a very powerful and direct Thrash with which one has a good time. And, on very many occasions, at least for me, that is the fundamental element.

Jose Antonio Batista **8**



BENEFAC- TOR DECEASE (GR) Abnormal Attachments

Xtreem Music, 2025

Many of us associate the Hellenic country, within extreme music, fundamentally with Black Metal. In fact, bands such as ROTTING CHRIST, VARATHRON and a few more gave shape, back in the early nineties of the last century, to a particular and recognizable sound and style within Black Metal. Less well known at a general level are the Thrash and Death scenes. And without a doubt, there are very good bands (the

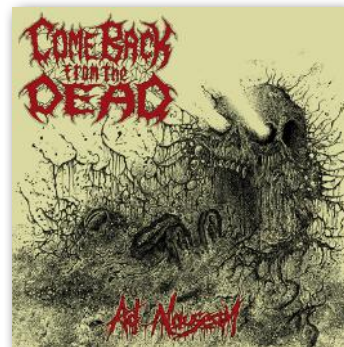
thrashers VIOLENT DEFINITION comes to mind right now). **BENEFAC- TOR DECEASE**, from Athens, play Thrash, but of a technical cut. They were founded in 2007, although, after a period in which it is not entirely clear whether they were split up or inactive (2010-2012), they returned in 2012. "Abnormal Attachments" is their second record, following their 2015 debut titled "Anatomy of an Angel", both on the active Madrid-based label Xtreem Music. They are a quintet formed by Zissis (guitar), Panos (vocals), Dimitris (bass), Kostas (guitar) and Joni (drums).

On "Abnormal Attachments" we find 11 tracks in almost 48 minutes, although "Sadistic Satisfaction" is an intro and "Eroticised Felonies" an instrumental interlude based on guitars and bass. The remaining tracks move, as we pointed out earlier, within the lines of technical-progressive Thrash, or better, technical Thrash/Speed, as there are ingredients, above all in the guitars, of both styles. As is customary in technical sub-styles, the tracks, although fast and aggressive as befits Thrash/Speed, are complex in their composition and structure, with numerous tempo changes and "virtuoso" moments. Examples of this are "Archbishops of Death", "Acid Stalker", "Imprisonment Atrocities", which, in its 7 minutes, even features a jazz-influenced passage, or the album closer "African Leishmaniasis". Somewhat more direct, but without setting aside their technical and progressive musical vision, are, for example, "Abnormal Attachments" or "Gospel of Antichrist". "Violent Reprisal", on the other hand, is a straightforward short Thrash Metal track. The vocal section has "worn on me" a little. Panos moves between a Mille Petrozza (KREATOR) and a Ron Royce (CORONER), with some slight Black Metal tonalities, forming a style that does not quite fit for me. The musicians are very good (including the bassist, who has presence in the recording), but the production does not do them justice. It is not bad, far from it, but it has a "something" I have not managed to identify (raw? basic? flat?) that spoils the whole slightly if one takes into account the technical-progressive tendency of the music and its demands in the sound department.

Dedicating oneself to technical-progressive Thrash is a risky bet. Either you make a brilliant record or you end up with a work in which it shows that you are

not quite there... (sometimes, simplicity is a virtue). **BENEFAC- TOR DECEASE** is, in my modest opinion as a longtime listener, in this latter case. But they are a relatively young band that could offer us solid work in the future if they polish certain aspects.

Jose Antonio Batista **6.5**



COME BACK FROM THE DEAD (ES) Ad Nauseam

Coffin Entrails Sound / Taume Rcs, 2026

COME BACK FROM THE DEAD

return with "Ad Nauseam", an EP that reaffirms their identity within Spanish death metal and demonstrates that, despite the discographic silence of recent years, the band continues operating with absolute conviction. Here there are no experiments or unexpected turns: what they offer is old, dirty death metal macerated in putrefaction, executed with an energy that can only be achieved when a band perfectly understands who they are and what they want to convey.

The EP opens with "Sick to Death", an immediate declaration of intent. Sharp, catchy riffs with that Swedish edge that has always accompanied the band, but without falling into imitation. The band plays with very well-measured tempo changes, and the central instrumental section demonstrates that, even within a raw approach, there is room for dynamics and tension. The production, deliberately organic, amplifies that sensation of corrosion: rough guitars, present bass and a drum kit that strikes without artifice.

"Waves of Maggots..." introduces a heavier, almost dragging approach, where the melodies and doom accents contribute a different nuance without breaking the cohesion of the EP. It is a cut that evidences the band's capacity to move within the death metal spectrum without losing identity. The vocals, with that rough and aggressive edge, function as a constant anchor, maintaining the pressure even in the slower moments.

"Autopsy of a Genocide" is the most direct attack of the work: fast, street-tough and with a crust vein that fits perfectly with the attitude of the band. The ending, with a guitar duet that adds a melodic touch without softening the whole, is one of the

most memorable moments of the EP. Here **COME BACK FROM THE DEAD** demonstrate that their rawness is not at odds with intelligent composition.

The title track, "Ad Nauseam", closes the work with a hypnotic, almost ritual opening, before leading into an explosion of riffs that encapsulates everything that defines the band: filth, energy and a deep understanding of the most primitive death metal. It is the cut that best summarizes the essence of the EP and the current direction of the band.

On a critical level, "Ad Nauseam" presents two details worth noting. The first is its duration: the EP is brief, too brief given the solidity it displays, and leaves the feeling that the band could have developed this compositional line even further. The second is that, although the sound is absolutely faithful to their identity, it introduces no new elements within the genre. This is not a problem — the band does not pretend to reinvent anything — but it is a nuance worth pointing out.

As a whole, "Ad Nauseam" is a forceful, honest and personality-laden return. **COME BACK FROM THE DEAD** remain one of the most reliable formations of national old school death metal, capable of combining rawness, attitude and memorable riffs without losing authenticity. An EP that strikes, that drags you along and confirms that the band continues in full creative form.

Luis Martínez **8**



CRUENTA VENGANZA (DE) Legend

Bitume Productions, 2026

Bitume Productions reissued on January 30th, 2026 the third work of the Death metal act **CRUENTA VENGANZA**, called "Legend". Let us recall that the record originally appeared independently and digitally on May 16th, 2025.

The lineup of the band is: Quebrantahuesos (bass and vocals), Cráneo-Escisionista (guitar and vocals).

The German duo continues offering works based on Robert Rodríguez's "Machete" trilogy. In general terms, we are not looking at anything out of this world. However, it must be acknowledged that there is a very good sense of melody, without

losing a single iota of the violence that characterizes the genre they execute. We are faced with 10 cuts solid as rock, where highs and lows or negative jolts never appear. There are one or two surprises, yes, but they are by no means negative. Keep reading, as I will mention them throughout the article. In another order of things, the production, despite being crisp, seems somewhat amateur, but nothing to worry about in the slightest. Regarding the artwork, starting from what the lyrics talk about, I think it is fitting. Does it grab attention? Well, that is up to each individual. At least it is not typical.

The six strings, dramatic and furious in equal measure, incite headbanging. They are built on the basis of double harmonies, tremolo picking attacks and heavy and fluid onslaughts. The solos are more than adequate, adding a certain rocky aftertaste in "Machete Lives". Worth highlighting is the use of acoustic guitar in "Galactic Showdown". There you have two things that will cause astonishment in more than one person.

As far as vocals are concerned, as could not be otherwise, we have deep yet intelligible growls. Do you want more things that might cause you amazement? Well, from now I warn you that in "Space Killer" there are clean choruses that are by no means easy listening, and that in the aforementioned "Machete Lives" they introduce a dark narrated section.

Entering the subject of percussion, I have had the feeling that the mid-tempo have a little more ground than the skank and blast beats. Give it a listen yourselves and see what feeling it gives you.

The truth is that I am not able to recommend any specific track. All of them are, in the good sense of the phrase, cut from the same cloth, making the LP go down without any problem whatsoever from beginning to end.

"Legend" will not change your life. However, it will make you have a good time.

Jesús Muñoz Caballero **7**



CRYPTIC SHIFT (GB) Overspace & Supertime

Metal Blade Records, 2026

Regarding the panorama of technical extreme metal in recent

KAMIJO

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BRING THE NOISE

years, I must confess that **CRYPTIC SHIFT** are among those who have captured my attention the most. Lovers of cosmic and spatial themes, they present their second full-length work, called "Overspace & Supertime", which on this occasion comes through Metal Blade Records (AMON AMARTH, HATE, PSYCROPTIC...).

Established in 2015 from the English city of Leeds, their previous full-length was called "Visitations from Enceladus" and was published in 2020, after which they released a split alongside other bands in that same year, and following which little or nothing new had come to light from their side.

The duration of the album may be a problem for some listeners, as it is quite extensive and full of vertiginous tempo changes, others quite twisted, breakneck speeds, shrill vocals... in short, not suitable for those with heart conditions.

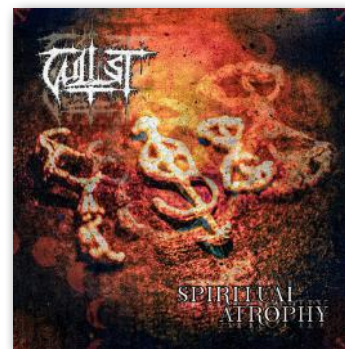
In the first cut "Cryogenically Frozen", you can already feel their progressive influences, blended with the technique of their members and a good dose of brutality and aggression. It is followed by "Stratocumulus Evergaol", the longest of all and divided into six different parts (the closing track and title track does so in four), in which strange time signatures, unusual chords and insólito sounds from another plane succeed one another... but equally calmer moments, with clean guitars or vocals. For "Hexagonal Eyes (Diverity Trepaphymphasyzm)", they have even shot a music video. The sound is crisp and powerful (produced by a couple of their members) and the lyrics deal with space battles between asteroids, cryogenic chambers, unusual hyperspace environments... Whenever these matters are addressed in a metal album, the classic VOIVOD, NOCTURNUS (in fact, the recently and sadly departed Mike Browning collaborates briefly on this work) or the more contemporary VEKTOR, BLOOD INCANTATION come to mind... a theme on the rise that seems to be of considerably greater interest than one might think.

CRYPTIC SHIFT is formed by Xander Bradley on guitars and vocals, Joss Farrington also on guitars, John Riley on bass and Ryan Sheperson on drums. For the recording and mixing they have once again counted on Jack Helliwell (DESCENDANCY, ELIMINATION, UNBURIER...) and his DC Studios, mastered by Greg Chandler (ESOTERIC, OFFICIUM TRISTE, TODOMAL...) at Priory Recording Studio, and cover artwork by Canadian artist Jesse Jacobi (TOMB MOLD, SPIRIT ADRIFT, DREAM UNENDING...).

"Overspace & Supertime" consists of five new songs and more than eighty minutes of technical and intense thrash/death metal, with a science fiction theme that will appeal to fans of similar

bands such as SADUS, ATHEIST, VEKTOR...

Robin RM **9**



CULTIST (CA)

Spiritual Atrophy

Awakening Records, 2026

CULTIST return with "Spiritual Atrophy", an album that redefines their identity and consolidates their position within Canadian death metal. If on "Manic Despair" dark atmospheres and a more ritualistic approach predominated, here the band decides to strike with a direct rawness, centered on the riff and on an aggression that gives no quarter. It is a work that sounds like conviction, hunger and a clear will to harden their proposition without losing the darkness that has always characterized them.

The intro "Divination Whispers" opens the album with a cinematic and disturbing tone, almost like a premonition of what is to come. It is clear that **CULTIST** do not renounce atmosphere, but now they use it as a detonator, not as an axis. When "Coursing Between Worlds" kicks in, the shift is immediate: dense, repetitive and abrasive riffs, with that recognizable influence of MORBID ANGEL or VADER, and a drum kit that maintains tension with direct attacks and explosive blast beats. Here the new approach is already perceptible: the riff rules, and everything else orbits around it.

The incorporation of Betzi Poitras on guitars is one of the great successes of the album. Her riffs are authentic lead explosions, sharp and memorable, and contribute a more defined identity to the group's sound. The production, raw and organic, amplifies that character: crunchy guitars, present bass and a natural drum kit that, although at times sits slightly buried in the mix, maintains the necessary aggression to sustain the whole.

The triple vocal attack is another of the elements that energizes the album. Grossberndt, Poitras and Petigo share guttural and raspy registers with a variety that adds dynamism without breaking cohesion. On tracks such as "Reality Shaper", where the riffs become unsettling and the solo borders on dementia, the vocals function as a wall of constant pressure. It is one of the fiercest cuts on the album and one of

those that best represents the new direction of **CULTIST**.

"Neophyte" plays with nineties influences and a contorted ending that demonstrates that the band is not afraid to introduce complex structures. "Phenomena" is pure attack, with a bass that finally acquires prominence and reinforces the sensation of brutality. "Ascension", with its progressive approach and a guest solo that adds a touch of controlled chaos, is one of the most interesting moments on the record. "False Prophet" and the title track "Spiritual Atrophy" close the album with violence and atmosphere, balancing aggression and dark narrative.

On a critical level, it must be mentioned that, despite its solidity, **CULTIST** do not stray too far from the codes of traditional death metal, and that certain passages may sound familiar within the genre. Also worth noting is that the mix, at moments, slightly buries the drums and some vocal lines. These are minor details, but they are present.

As a whole, "Spiritual Atrophy" is a ferocious, compact and convincing album that demonstrates that **CULTIST** have found a balance between old school brutality and progression, between rawness and complexity. It is a work that strikes, that drags you along and that makes it clear that the band is in full creative form. A step forward from their debut and a confirmation that their identity is more defined than ever.

Luis Martínez **8**



DAIDALOS (DE)

Dante

Rockshots Records, 2026

Chapter 4362 of the Mythical-Allegorical Compendium of the relations between the classic works of Literature, their interaction and influence with Music and other of the so-called Fine Arts. Because yes, oh boys and girls, at the point we have reached, advancing already into the second quarter of the first century of the millennium, the long shadow of classical authors continues to influence the new generations of artists, giving rise to new works that revise, revisit and pay homage to them. So, to kick things off — well, I'll be damned! Color and learn with Teo!

What is the reason for this intro? Well, a great many people who

look back without any shame (why should they have any?) and rescue works from the past and work on them as inspiration to devise something new. The past as an excuse for the future. Because, just recently, Christopher Nolan has produced an Odyssey. The year 2026, with its advances and its technology, revising a work from three millennia ago. Well, I'll be damned! And no, we are not going to talk about the film; I have not seen it either, so I could not even if I wanted to. But we are going to link the year in question with one of the crowning works of universal Literature, composed back in the fourteenth century.

Dante Alighieri, the Divine Dante, composed the three parts of "The Divine Comedy" between 1304 and 1321, the year of the poet's death. Three clearly differentiated parts — the Inferno, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso — narrate the poet's journey through the different circles of the underworld, guided by Virgil (Dante also revisited the Latin classics who had preceded him fourteen centuries earlier). And as Nietzsche reminded us in "Beyond Good and Evil", man feels a tremendous impulse to stare into the abyss. So staring into Hell is connatural to souls endowed with a special sensibility, be it Alighieri in the fourteenth century or Tobias Püschner in the midst of the twenty-first, who under the alias of **DAIDALOS** presents his latest work with the simplistic name of "Dante". It is true that beneath that apparent triviality we find a profound work of deep emotional, lyrical and musical weight. The journey begins with a "Dante" that already places us in the coordinates of those DIMMU BORGIR of "Death Cult Armageddon" and that... That is already saying a great deal, oh boys and girls, as we are talking about one of the pinnacles of symphonic Black Metal. The production is crystal clear, so the orchestral parts are not buried under the frontal guitar attack. And it is that combination between the rawness of Black Metal and the atmospheric quality that gives the work its entire identity.

"Ashes" is a fine example of this. The drums sound demolishing, the double bass drum is crisp. That is what current productions and the use of technology bring. Yes, those crisp and perfect drum hits are undoubtedly thanks to the use of triggers; and then we know what follows — the subsequent processing, the production, etc... to give as a result the specific drum track; but you still have to play every single one of those hits! And Tobias has handled all of that — the drums, the keyboards, writing and composing all those lines. Something that it does lack — and this is almost common to all Black Metal works — is that in all that sonic vortex no bass can be clearly distinguished. Damn, how that bothers me! And yes, I know the-

re will always be the inevitable MetalPako who prefers the wretched recordings of the French Black Legions. And yes, I also enjoy those non-professional recordings, like a horrendous sonic blast. But I also enjoy professional recordings, where every detail is taken care of, where every instrument can be heard clearly and transparently. **DAIDALOS** is the musical version of Dante's work over decades of writing his Comedy. No wonder Tobias looks back and records a concept as vast as this album. "Storm" gives way to a solemn interlude called "Minos" before plunging headlong into the next piece called "King", which is more Symphonic Black, with its orchestrations, its inserts, its gutturals, its blast beats... And the journey, the descent into the depths of hell, continues passing through "Styx", that river of the underworld that constituted its natural barrier, separating the earth and the world of the dead. We pass through the city of "Dis", in the Sixth Circle of Hell, another step of symphonic Black that carries us in our descent to Tartarus. And in that descent, in that fall, we discover the orchestral "Phlegethon", the flaming river that flowed through the infernal regions. Because as has always been said, as in Heaven so on Earth. And Hell was not going to be any different, for we know that the works of the Evil One seek to imitate the Almighty and if in Eden the Tigris and the Euphrates crossed, in the zones of the underworld there are also rivers; not of fresh, bubbling water, but of fire, of dark waters that dragged the souls of the dead toward even deeper zones and torments.

Closing out the record we pass through "Malebolge", the eighth circle of Hell; through a "Euphobia" — and let me remind you that "eu" is the Greek prefix to designate the true or the good. And phobos or phobia, well... A word to the wise is sufficient. What is beyond doubt is that the work of **DAIDALOS** is what it is: it is what it had to be and it is what was expected of it. It is a sincere work that looks back toward the classics, toward one of the crowning works of Literature; it is Calliope and Thalia; it is Dante and it is Tobias; it is a work of the twenty-first century connected to one of the fourteenth; it is Black and it is Symphonic. It is, in short, the "Dante" of **DAIDALOS**.

Cesar Luis Morales **8.9**



FUNEBRARUM (US)

Beckoning the Void of Eternal Silence

Pulverised Records, 2026

FUNEBRARUM were and continue to be avid defenders of the authentic and heavy Death Metal that was being made back in the 90s. They are known for their heaviness, their melodies and their good taste when it comes to composing good, thick and brutally guttural Death Metal.

The only drawback is that they release new material every 4 or 5 years... and they only have three full-length albums: "Beneath the Columns of Abandoned Gods" in 2001, "The Sleep of Morbid Dreams" in 2009 and this new "Beckoning the Void of Eternal Silence"... 17 years later! A shame, given the quality and sonic contribution...

There is certain information suggesting that the record was supposed to have come out in 2019 — in fact it was recorded that year — although I know from good sources that not everything was finished that year. I understand that this is where such an exaggerated delay in its release comes from. Who knows.

I am passionate about ultra-heavy sound, otherworldly vocals, mid-tempo sections mixed with a bit more speed. That was what primordial Death Metal consisted of (speed was also important, of course... but this was the foundation). And **FUNEBRARUM** have always followed those simple steps in their (de)compositions.

I am also a die-hard fan of anything they have been putting out since their beginnings, back in 1999. Not in vain, I cast the line to sign them to my now defunct and buried label Qabalah Productions in the early 2000s. It did not work out precisely because of the band's instability during those years. And because Qabalah disappeared afterwards...

With Daryl Kahan, their vocalist, I have also been in contact in the past due to the coincidences and musical tastes that unite us. He comes from Hardcore/Punk and one of his first bands called CITIZENS ARREST is one of my favorites for its ferocity and aggression.

But let us focus on "Beckoning the Void of Eternal Silence", this new fucking marvel of a record.

Few differences compared to the previous ones. They maintain those super heavy and brutal tunings, they continue to show they are capable of playing fast and then suddenly landing you a morbid and delirious mid-tempo that makes your hair stand on end.

The work of Charlie Korin (ASCENDED DEAD, CHTHONIC DEITY...) on drums, with those mid-tempos, those speed changes and his hard-hitting quality, leaves you breathless. Aided by Kyle

Winslow on bass with a powerful sound giving it those low frequencies that **FUNEBRARUM**'s music requires. The blend of both musicians in the rhythm section contributes everything the band needs to sound monumentally heavy.

Phil Tougas, one of the guitarists, is someone I have followed avidly since he formed CHTHE'ILIST in 2010. A band that goes very much in line with **FUNEBRARUM**. Apart from his multiple projects in recent years. I consider that he has brought an even greater maturity and class to the new work of **FUNEBRARUM**.

His companion on the six strings, Sam Osborne (HULDER, DEMONCY, WORM...), is no less impressive and I do not know why, but I think he has contributed certain very slight details that are a little more Black (a shriller vocal here, a riff there...) to some of the tracks... and for Satan's sake, do not think for a single second that this has absolutely anything to do with Black Metal!

The work behind the recording desk stayed in-house, as it was Phil and Charlie who handled the production. Perhaps that is why it sounds so good, so compact and so powerful.

Their sound you already know which direction it walks. Scandinavia in the 90s in the vein of DEMILICH, NIHILIST, GRAVE, DISMEMBER... combined with that American sound of those same years, in the style of INCANTATION, MORPHEUS DESCENDS, ROTTREVORE, IMMOLATION... heaviness everywhere, cavernous and Neanderthal rhythms and plenty of good old-fashioned brutality.

Another jaw-dropping cover courtesy of Daryl himself, which brings to mind those of the classic bands that would come out and leave you SPEECHLESS. You know, all the early stuff from labels like Nuclear Blast, Earache, Peaceville...

All of it a true "compendium brutality" for lovers of sonic mud, filth and morbid guttural.

There are few records in this 2026 that I would choose to take to a desert island, but "Beckoning the Void of Eternal Silence" would be one of them.

Antonio Pardo 10



GRAVEMASS (CA)
This is the Way
EndGame Records Inc, 2026

I spent some time looking into this work before receiving it and was able to read several lines that caught my attention. Certainly, all or almost all of what I could read was positive and striking, so my spirits were correctly settling in to face this review.

The record goes by the name of "This Is the Way" and is the debut of a band from Canada that calls itself **GRAVEMASS**, a suggestive name that can point us toward a possible album of blasphemous Extreme Metal. Well, I received the record and listened to it, evidently, for this review. Sincerely, after that certain buzz I had heard about this album, it has not ended up being what it seemed to be, in my opinion.

"This Is the Way" is a record that we could place within Death Metal mixed with certain doses of Black. A blend diluted in equal measure where we can find a certain lack of aggression for such an explosive mix of styles. Composed of ten songs, we also find a certain simplicity in its composition, designing short tracks to reach the listener with a certain ease, but without conviction. A lack of aggression and simplicity that, without being qualifiers that can diminish a record, do detract here in some way.

The record, musically speaking, is well executed. What is shown is displayed with the necessary foundations to prevent the record from falling apart. The sound also helps what is heard to do so effectively. But, as we mention, perhaps more aggression and grounding is missing to shake the listener roughly. Although within this dynamic, what they do know how to do is reach ears not so accustomed to the styles represented on this album with ease.

From the fourth track "Harvest of Soul" is where one perhaps enters more fully into the record. It is where we can find a more developed version of the band. We find a greater diversity of resources to craft their music. Entertaining songs such as "Fallen", which, despite being somewhat flat, goes down well, or "Abandon", where, with a certain hard-hitting quality, it keeps us listening. Even the title track could also be a worthwhile song. But in the end, it is a work that functions in stretches and, when it does, it walks a tightrope. As we say, this record has a correct execution, it sounds acceptable, but the lack of hard-hitting quality and its easy construction leave it as a somewhat flat work, even if they are capable of presenting themselves with determination before an audience not so settled and rooted within the most primordial sounds of the extreme Underground.

They have played their cards well and have recorded what they have decided to execute, but within that blasphemy to which they subscribe and choosing the standard styles of Extreme

Metal to spit out their message, and within an extreme scene full of good formations, for a large part of followers, one must offer more, one must give more; if not, you run the risk of ending up in a shopfront full of lights, but located on an empty street.

F. 6



HATING LIFE (ES)
Revenge From Beyond
Pulverised Records, 2026

From Zaragoza emerges **HATING LIFE**, a duo formed by Santiago Caverio and Javier Manzano, both coming from ATARAXY, who here decide to immerse themselves in an even more primitive, raw and putrid side of death metal. "Revenge From Beyond" is their debut, a mini album that does not seek to convince anyone outside the circle of devotees to the most infected and morbid sound of the genre. Its purpose is another: to reclaim the Swedish essence of the early 90s with an almost obsessive fidelity.

The first thing that strikes is the cavernous atmosphere: guitars coated in the muddiness of the HM-2, dense and low tuning, riffs that seem to emerge from a damp subsoil and a deliberately rough production, without modern polish or digital corrections. This is undoubtedly a point I highlight, as the record sounds fetid, muddy and dense, with that granular texture reminiscent of GRAVE, CONVULSE or the early ENTOMBED. Santi records everything in his home studio, which reinforces the sensation of organicity and unfiltered violence.

The EP maintains an effective balance between aggression and atmosphere. Tracks like "Into the Grave" or "Rebellion Against the Vile" function as direct discharges, while "A Sombre Night" introduces a layer of morbid melancholy that, without breaking the general aesthetic, provides a minimal contrast. Javi's vocals fit that lo-fi aesthetic: reverberant, torn, almost spectral.

However, it must be noted that "Revenge From Beyond" does not seek to innovate or surprise; its nature is to focus on a style already known by veterans, without artifice or strange inventions. Even for some listeners, the production may prove excessively dirty, sacrificing clarity in favor of atmosphere. We are

looking at a solid record, but one that does not pretend to convert new followers; it is designed for those who already enjoy the most grimy and primitive death metal.

Even so, the debut shows clear direction and potential. The duo knows exactly what they want to convey and how to do it: primitive riffs, tomb atmospheres, narrative and an execution that, without frills, delivers with precision.

In short, "Revenge From Beyond" is an honest, putrid and coherent debut that recovers the essence of the most cavernous Swedish death metal without falling into empty mimicry. It is not a record for everyone, but it is for those who seek uncompromising, rough, damp and tradition-faithful death metal.

Luis Martínez 8



HEIR CORPSE ONE (SE)
Destination: Domination
Emanzipation Productions, 2026

HEIR CORPSE ONE return with "Destination: Domination", an album that consolidates their identity within the most orthodox and corrosive Swedish death metal. If on their debut they already showed an absolute fondness for the HM-2 and macabre narrative, here they delve deeper into that universe of conceptual putrefaction, expanding the story of the "undead" survivors of the plane crash toward a genuine nation of moving corpses. A premise that, without being novel, does contribute cohesion and atmosphere to a work that lives and breathes in the key of tradition.

From the very first cut, "Destination Domination", it is clear that Rogga Johansson is operating once again in surgical precision mode: dry riffs, Sunlight school groove and a structure that wastes no time on frills. The lead guitar of Kjetil Lynghaug contributes that so characteristic melodic brightness, always contained, always at the service of the main riff. This balance between rawness and detail is one of the strong points of the album.

"Undeath From Above" and "Reaping Human Harvest" maintain the line: direct death metal, headbanging-oriented, without distractions. Here the band moves on safe ground, perhaps too safe and without taking musical risks, a detail that demonstrates

the tendency to repeat patterns already familiar to listeners of these sounds. However, the execution is impeccable and the energy, constant.

The first inflection point arrives with "Shelter in the Darkness", where the band decelerates and leaves space for more melancholic melodies. It is one of the most interesting tracks and highlights a greater compositional maturity and their ability to generate atmosphere without losing hard-hitting quality. "Well of Blood" resumes the aggression with a very well-resolved central acceleration and a particularly inspired solo.

"Thresher" and "Mechanisms of Mortality" continue exploring the most old-school side of the album: heavy palm-mutes, frenetic rhythms and a production that, without being modern, does allow each layer to be distinguished with sufficient clarity. The bass of Peter Svensson, however, is somewhat relegated in the mix, a small detail that reduces depth in the whole.

The final stretch is the most solid section of the record. "Motor-dead" stands out for its abrasive mid-tempo and rhythmic explosions, becoming one of the most celebrated cuts. "The Last Supper" contributes anguish and tension, and was chosen as a single for its accomplished atmosphere and its ability to synthesize the spirit of the album. "Undead Nation" closes the work with a slower and more mysterious approach.

As a whole, "Destination: Domination" is a highly competent, coherent and style-faithful album that does not attempt to reinvent anything, but rather to reaffirm the compositional reliability of Johansson and company. It is a solid, enjoyable and honest work, with moments of greater depth that elevate the whole, though without breaking the limits of the most classic Swedish death metal.

Luis Martínez 8



LEAD INJECTOR (DE)

Witching Attack

High Roller Records, 2026

A young and new band from Dresden, Germany, who, through the German label High Roller, brings us a record that, from the moment it started playing, made me smile. And I smiled because it took me, in barely a

few seconds, back to the eighties of the last century. "Witching Attack" is a kind of time travel by youngsters who were born several decades later, but who have managed to make music that sinks its roots into that era. Justus (drums), Leo (bass and vocals) and Jason (guitars) must have thoroughly soaked themselves in the sounds of that glorious stage of extreme music, because they bring us 10 tracks of an aged Black/Thrash/Heavy, simple, basic, entertaining, fun and very well done. For those who do not know much about this world, to say that a record like "Witching Attack" is "fun" must sound somewhat strange, but those of us who have been in it for a long time know perfectly well what we mean. Here there are no virtuosisms, technical showboating, complex compositions, brilliant productions... just a handful of direct, uncomplicated, rough, moderately fast tracks, with their corresponding tempo changes, with catchy and even "danceable" moments.

As we have just pointed out, **LEAD INJECTOR** practice a fusion of Thrash Metal, first-generation Black and some Heavy Metal. The result is music in which there are clear influences from the old SODOM ("Persecution Mania" era and some of "Obsessed by Cruelty"), including the vocal department, and from the early VENOM. For example, "Siege upon Heaven" and "Pest Thrash" could perfectly belong on that Thrash masterpiece that is "Persecution Mania", while "Sacrifice this Bitch" and, above all, "Chains" — a catchy mid-tempo between Black and Heavy Metal — could sit on any of the first four VENOM records (the vocal intro is pure Cronos!). "Witching Attack" steps slightly outside the general line of the record — it is a short, mid-tempo track with certain crust-punk overtones, above all in the guitar sound. At high volume it is almost impossible not to "dance" to it.

If doing something simple but well is a virtue, **LEAD INJECTOR** has it. Without being anything original, "Witching Attack" is a magnificent record. It will appeal to lovers of Black/Thrash with eighties Heavy Metal touches. Smiling is a magnificent sign!

Jose Antonio Batista 8.5



LOCUS NOIR (CH)

Shadow Sun

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Listenable Records, 2026

What started as a dare between friends, or better said, a "Hold my drink!", has ended up being one of the finest Gothic Rock records of the last two decades.

It all began when producer and musician Drop, current member of the legendary Swiss black metallers SAMAEL, showed his bandmate in SYBREED, Ben DMN, a Gothic Metal band. This detail made Ben realize that people call anything Gothic Metal, and in an eagerness to demonstrate to his companion what Gothic Rock or Gothic Metal really is, he told him that in one week he would have a track of this style ready.

And taking TYPE O NEGATIVE's "Bloody Kisses" as a mold — a seminal record in dark music and in Ben's life — he began composing, recalling his early adolescent years when post-punk and Gothic Rock dominated his life.

So just over a year later we have in our hands the result of such a dare, and which, due to the restlessness Ben had to do something in this style, ends up giving birth to a new band under the name of **LOCUS NOIR** and the title of "Shadow Sun" as a debut.

What a gem Mr. Ben has produced — and while it is true that the mirror in which he initially wanted to see himself was the TYPE O NEGATIVE masterpiece, the great bands of the dark movement that marked his life so deeply soon began to influence him: SISTERS OF MERCY, FIELDS OF NEFILIM, the early years of PARADISE LOST and a long list of others from the mid-eighties and early nineties. However, although all these bands are present in the final result, I think I would define it musically as closer to the third generation of the gothic movement with bands such as LOVE LIKE BLOOD or THE DREADFUL SHADOWS, with that more guitar-driven touch with Hard Rock and even at times Heavy tinges, than to the post-punk or Cold Wave sounds that the first and second generation had accustomed us to.

Of course, bands like THE MIS- SION, GENE LOVES JEZEBEL or the CULT of "Sonic Temple", somewhat more commercial, are names that may come to mind, or even MOONSPELL of "Irreligious", but in general the record sounds like classic Gothic Rock, with a spectacular guitar work courtesy of Drop himself, who stepped in to help his bandmate throughout the entire process. Alongside the Swiss Drop and Ben, on bass is Ales Campanelli, Drop's bandmate in SAMAEL and also a member of SYBREED, who gives it that deep and resonant sound so necessary in the style to consider a band true Gothic Rock. On drums, Benjamin Marmier (ex BLOODY VISION and ex SEELENTOD) gives the compositions a variety not common

in the dark movement, which is normally more mechanical and basic, far less organic than what it sounds like here, which is spectacular. Ben DMN leads the formation in composition and vocals, bringing us a register different from the one he uses in his other bands (SYBREED, LUCIFER ASCENDING); here he gives his voice a deeper tone and sets aside his screaming or extreme facet, without reaching the vocal depth of the genre as embodied by an Andrew Eldritch, Yorck Eysel or Carl McCoy — despite this, he more than delivers and lands in a middle ground with sufficient melancholy in the melodies to make it perfect.

"Shadow Sun" has truly brilliant moments such as the track that served as presentation to the world at the end of 2025, titled "Cemetery Youth", which features the collaboration of Ben Christo of the irreplaceable SISTERS OF MERCY on guitar and Céline Bart of EXXES as vocal support. Or its second advance single "Hollow", a mid-tempo that does have moments, due to its slower and denser cadence, closer to TYPE O NEGATIVE, as does the fantastic "Thicker Than Darkness Itself".

On the heavier side we have "A Dismal Romance", "She Haunts the Night", "Death, That Elusive Mistress" or "Full Moon Therianthropy" with guitars that grab you, very well crafted and varied, playing with the riff-driven guitar in the foreground and the melodic lead work slightly more hidden — the kind we goths love so much — recalling those third-generation gothic bands influenced by post-punk and the hard rock of the eighties.

The bells and the sound of ravens warn us of the ending with "Reburial", which returns to the slower, denser and darker path, and is also the longest track on "Shadow Sun" with more than six minutes of development. Quite atmospheric and with the shadow of TYPE O NEGATIVE, MOONSPELL or even a latter-day KATATONIA lurking in the darkness.

As a bonus we have a cover of LADY GAGA's "Marry the Night" that neither adds nor detracts — it passes somewhat unnoticed in the face of the quality of everything heard before — and "How Harsh Is the Light of Dawn", which does not stand out of place in a work of great quality, being a bonus track outside the body of "Shadow Sun".

In short, a truly great record that has surprised me in a style of which I am an absolute fan, but in which it is not easy to win me over so quickly on first listens as the proposition of **LOCUS NOIR** has done, raising the hype so high that I can only wish that Ben's project works out so as to have a new work in my hands soon.

For the time being, **LOCUS NOIR**, faced with the impossibility of counting on Drop in the



"BLINDEYES"
feat. Yukina from
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"FIVE TIMES DEAD"
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band for touring, has secured the services of Claire Genoud (KILLIT, SERMON, ex XELASEN) on guitar — we shall see if this change affects the music in any way and we find out soon how it works live to get an idea of what the most immediate future of the band may look like.

For now, **LOCUS NOIR** begins its journey with what is almost a perfect record.

Kike Mollá Tormo 9



MASCHARAT (IT)

Ars Aura Mortis

Remparts Productions, 2026

MASCHARAT (mask) was founded in Milan (Italy) in 2010, although its members are Italian and French. They have not been particularly prolific, as throughout all these years they have only published two full-length works, "Mascharat" in 2017, and the one we are discussing, "Ars Aura Mortis", this very year, released by the French label Remparts Productions. However, what matters most is not the number of productions, but their quality. And in this recording there is a great deal of it. Cutirons (drums), Grimr (guitars), Stilleben (bass and vocals) and Hellequin (lead vocals and guitars) have created a grandiose Black Metal work. A Black Metal that, as is customary in the countries of southern Europe, has a series of more or less identifiable ingredients: its epicness, the Mediterranean cultural influence in its concept, aesthetics and lyrics, etc. In fact, in **MASCHARAT** a certain sound of the Greek bands of the nineties can be intuited, although, as we shall see below, the greatest influence is that of the Norwegian scene of that same era.

"Ars Aura Mortis" contains eight tracks (41:03 minutes), although the first and the last are the intro and the outro respectively, where the sound is acoustic (piano, keyboards, acoustic guitars...). In the remaining six cuts, **MASCHARAT** offer us a powerful, fast Black Metal with well-structured, composed and executed songs and occultist overtones (above all in the lyrical part and in the general concept of the band and the record). We are not talking about simple, monotonous Black Metal, but about very well-made music, yet with the coldness, the aggression and the speed of the best of this style.

The first track after the intro, "Re Mida", is grandiose — a demonstration of Black Metal of the highest quality, with fast sections and mid-tempos with acoustic guitars. The sound of these is typically Black Metal: cold, cutting, with repetitive riffs over a drum with a sustained rhythm that, together, generate a suffocating, oppressive sensation. The vocals are purely Black Metal, also treated with reverb, which gives them a depth that fits perfectly within the style of **MASCHARAT**. The Norwegian influence we indicated earlier (particularly MAYHEM) can be identified in "Albedo" or "Citrinas". However, in the spectacular "Rubedo", the style, from my point of view, leans more toward the Swedish sound, which, as we know, uses more melody in the guitars.

"Ars Aura Mortis" is a sensational record, a very notable work within orthodox Black Metal that, in such a saturated musical panorama and being released through a small label, runs the risk of going unnoticed. And to round off the work, the production is magnificent: clear, powerful, well-balanced and with an outstanding bass drum sound (rarely have I heard in this style that kind of kick drum sound).

Jose Antonio Batista 9.5



MESSTICATOR (DE)

Total Mastery

Testimony Records, 2026

"Total Mastery" is the title of the second album by these Germans called **MESSTICATOR**, which has been launched by the label from the same city and same country as them (Hamburg), Testimony Records (SOULBURN, RESURRECTED, TEMPLE OF DREAD...).

Created back in 2019, their debut record was called "Forthcoming Revelation" and appeared in 2022 (preceded by a demo), followed a year later by the EP "Season of the Aabyss: Chapter I", featuring no less than three covers of SLAYER (so the name of the EP is no coincidence, as you can verify).

Good and crushing sound they have achieved for this new material, which presents us with a powerful and intense work of current death/thrash metal, formed by these eleven songs in more than fifty-three minutes of duration.

That is perhaps one of the ob-

jections that can be raised against this work — its length — as at times I get the feeling of it being too long. The whole is a musical tornado, sharp and brutal, with well-judged tempo changes, melodies, catchy passages and a savage and bestial vocalist, a true maniac that you can verify without any hesitation in tracks such as "The Pitslayer", with good mid-tempos, or the aggressive "High Ground", released as an advance single. Speaking of those, also released as singles and worthy of mention are "Bloodsport", powerful and fast, or the ferocious "The Tyrant's Scepter". Equally, some contemporary Swedish influences appear here and there, as for example in "Mass Human Extinction", "Deathtouch" or the closing "Cougar Claws (Return of the Leathermilf)". The lyrics revolve around a superior entity that would govern, judge and punish all human beings.

MESSTICATOR is composed of Thomas Thede on vocals, Marvin Brühl on guitars, Kongo Uwe on drums and the latest addition on bass, Christian Wiesener. Recorded, mixed and mastered at Die Wellenschmiede in their city with Timo Höcke (DOWNFALL OF GAIA, MANTAR, INNER AXIS...). On the other hand, the cover artwork belongs to Russian artist Andreas Christanetoff (ABORTED, PYREXIA, PHLEBOTOMIZED...).

"Total Mastery" is a German monolith of energetic death/thrash metal that will hook you if you are a connoisseur of bands in a similar vein to the now-defunct DEW-SCENTED, LEGION OF THE DAMNED, TORTURE SQUAD...

Robin RM 6.5



NECROGORE (IT)

Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena

Awakening Records, 2026

The name of the band, **NECROGORE**, the logo and the cover artwork of "Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" could lead one to think — it happened to me — of a Brutal Death, Goregrind or similar styles band. However, the music that the Italians make has little to do with those sounds, as we shall see below. It is a trio founded in 2022 and made up of Alex Paterna on guitar and vocals, Chris on drums, and Lucas on bass and lead vocals. The record we are reviewing is their debut, following two EPs and a

split.

"Ectoplasmic Rape Phenomena" brings us, in 35:12 minutes, 10 tracks, although the first is an intro that recalls the soundtracks of the gore films of the nineteen eighties and the last, in that same vein, a cover of the main theme of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2". The rest of the cuts fall within a Death Metal that their label places in the style of the famous Swedish bands of the early nineties. You know, that deep, heavily compressed guitar sound that recalls a chainsaw and was achieved with the equally famous Boss HM-2 pedal configured with all controls at maximum. This element is present throughout the entire record; however, the music of **NECROGORE** is not a clone of the old Swedish Death, although there is a quite notable influence. Thus, at moments they resemble PAGANIZER more, for example, than ENTOMBED, in the sense that they combine the Swedish sound with classic Death Metal and a pinch of Crust. Making a global comment on the record, the tracks are characterized, in general, by being fast (though not excessively so), direct, simple and catchy (within the limits of music of this type). A sample of what we are saying are the ones that open the record (after the intro): "Raptured, Tortured and Chained" and "Offered to the Dead". In "Mediumistic Intercession" they introduce some dissonant elements in the guitars, though over the same "Swedish" foundation. The title track is instrumental and allows one to verify that Alex, Chris and Lucas are good musicians. Finally, "Sulphureal Morbid Corpse", which is the longest cut on the record (6:36 minutes), contains a slow section from its midpoint onward in which background keyboards are used and we can identify some Death-Doom influence.

Nothing novel, nothing exceptional, simply a good and entertaining record that will appeal to those who enjoy this type of Death Metal — myself included.

Jose Antonio Batista 7.5



ROTTEN BLASPHEMY (CO)

Worshippers of Chaos

Witches Brew, 2026

The already veteran German label Witches Brew (INFERNO NUCLEAR, FATAL PUNISHMENT, LIVING FAST...) puts into circulation

what amounts to the first full-length work of the Colombians **ROTTEN BLASPHEMY**, which goes by the title of "Worshippers of Chaös".

The band was created back in 2011, after which they gradually released minor editions such as some demos, an EP, a split alongside four other groups launched in 2018... arriving at a couple of singles prior to the album.

The record is composed of eight songs in around thirty-six minutes of duration, with a formula in which they blend the most classic and direct black metal with thrash, a little punk... with blasphemous and satanic lyrics, creating an aggressive and intense piece that I do not think will be played precisely at Sunday mass in any corner of Christian territory.

Chaos and violence join from the very first bars of "Black Noise", the track that serves as the opener and that becomes somewhat convoluted, with which you will resist the Nazarene and leave vengeance in ungodly hands... although the best may still be to come in the second half of this work, with the previously released advance singles such as "Opponent" and "Rise and Sin" (also the most extensive of all of them), perhaps a step higher and with a slightly more personal touch than the preceding tracks, but without offering great technique or innovation in their execution, always in a simple and effective manner. On that list, I would equally include the unsettling closing "Drag Me Through Fire (and Blood)", with which alongside the rulers of darkness and the spiritual hosts of wickedness, you will be able to combat the celestial regions with ardor and passion.

ROTTEN BLASPHEMY on this recording is composed of only a duo, consisting of Necropunisher on bass and vocals and Orión on guitars, drums, cover artwork and also vocals. Lately it seems they have recruited Morbid Ghoul to take charge of the drums and thus constitute an insane trio.

Good sound they have achieved for this debut record "Worshippers of Chaös", dark and crisp, which with their proposition may well be to the liking of followers of formations such as OLD, early SODOM, NUNSLAUGHTER...

Robin RM 6.5



SKADIN (RO) Wallachian Emperor

Loud Rage Music, 2026

From Romania comes the first LP of **SKADIN**, "Wallachian Emperor", released by Loud Rage Music. Recently formed in 2024 and debuting a year later with an EP "Fallen Echoes", Negru Voda gives free rein to his dark ideology in his first work, which accommodates a melodic black metal with folk and punk tinges.

Within the whirlwind of black metal bands that emerge daily, you sometimes come across different things that bring freshness to the style or attempt to detach themselves from the traditional, granting it a personality of its own.

The first time I heard the work of **SKADIN**, it did not awaken much in me — I thought, another black metal work, with the keyboards a bit high in the mix. But upon paying closer attention in subsequent listens, you discover those heavy guitar nuances, the solos that accompany the songs, the atmospheric and electronic elements that lend it epicness and beauty... but all coated with that halo of mystery and black metal coldness (although I still think the volumes should be more balanced).

In "Infernal War" those details appear alongside a treated clean voice that adds dynamism. "Fallen Echoes" is a more classic melodic black metal cut with heavy tinges, where the solo feels a bit short to me. "Dark Woods" camouflages itself with an intense aggression at the outset, only to create sonic landscapes, alternating that yin and yang throughout the cut.

"Last Man Alive" is perhaps the heaviest track on the work, with those atmospheric additions and those melodies rooted in the depth of the forest, also reflected in "Vlad Dracula", the quintessential character of Romania.

A work that lends a tinge of maturity to **SKADIN**, presenting their credentials and holding distinctive elements, although the volumes and some of the transitions — which are at times too abrupt when introducing keyboards or choruses — still need further work. But they are on the right path.

Juan Angel Martos 7



SOLNEGRE (ES) Anthems for the Grand Collapse

Meuse Music Records, 2026

The Spanish band based in the Balearic Islands, **SOLNEGRE**, is back with their new album "Anthems for the Grand Collapse", where after 20 months of work, they reflect their melodic doom/death metal filled with atmospheres, emotions and hard-hitting quality.

Recorded at Diorama Sound in Mallorca, it is released by Meuse Music Records and features artwork by Hans Trasid (AARA, PHOBETOR...), which reflects the pain and inner passion of the heart captured musically and lyrically by **SOLNEGRE**.

And you only need to listen to their opener "The Axiom / Song for the Inert Part II" to know that you are faced with a work of great quality, one that plays with calm and emotions, but inflicts marked and expansive doom rhythms across the sonic space, where the guitar solos are led by guest Mike Le Rosetti, granting a light within the darkness. A true anthem.

With "The Hollow Inside" we continue within that universe they present us, where the voice of Ukh and the percussion work of Tom stand out, perfectly accompanied by the enormous work of Rigen on guitars and Gebre on bass. A very powerful track, perfect for leaving us surprised by the national quality within a style that is rarely cultivated. By the way, to all of this must be added the voice of Pedro Inglés in the interlude, which only adds to what is perhaps my favorite cut on the album.

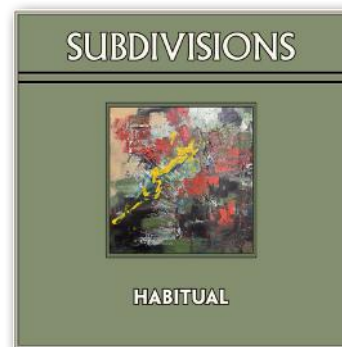
And the cuts are long and extensive, such as "For All That Could Have Been", which approaches ten minutes. Ten minutes of density and darkness, where Ukh conveys with his torn screams that anguish and melancholic heaviness of doom death to perfection, leaving us in the central section with a cleansing stretch, after which a touch of tempo and acceleration is applied.

On "In the Stillness of the Womb", guest musicians Gadea and Ineseta appear on vocals and Nuria Luis on violins, to create a beautiful sonata adorned with a contemplative and landscape beauty; a precious track that leads us to the close with "A Path of Aloneness", in which Edu also appears as a guest on the guitar solo and Carmen Jaime on vocals — a majestic and solemn cut that smells of a finale in the grandest fashion, exchanging rhythms with very marked and deep verses, where the bridges accelerate and the guitar solo sounds as if from another dimension.

SOLNEGRE have created an enormous work that all lovers of the genre should keep in their collection ready to enjoy from

this moment, but with an even better listen in the time that awaits us in the months ahead.

Juan Angel Martos 8.5



SUBDIVISIONS (US) Habitual

Dark Sails Entertainment, 2026

From the United States comes the new work of **SUBDIVISIONS**, "Habitual", an EP that intermingles the identifying marks of the band, hardcore and metalcore.

And although it is a very short work, it bears witness to the leap in quality they have made — you only need to listen to "Deadline" to get an idea of the band's sound, with Joe Przyworski on vocals modulating his aggression between screams and gutturals, the guitars of Brian Nichols and Lee Christenson sharp, leaving hints of core but with elements that recall death metal and progressive.

Speaking of progressive, "Erased" presents those nuances in a more unhurried and atmospheric cut, although with tempo variations to refine ideas — a line that is maintained in "Stake Ailment", but taking it a step further, with a peculiar vocal style where hardcore and the message take center stage, a varied cut with post tinges and personally one of my favorites.

"Frostbyte" is another variant song that alternates rhythms and styles with a very catchy feeling, although it lacks a certain punch in the final section — perhaps a lower tuning would help.

And almost without noticing we reach the end — "Sunburnt" provides the closing with the collaboration of Tim Jones (STARVED OF LIGHT, LEAFBLOWER). A cut that condenses the style of **SUBDIVISIONS**, with James Ashworth on bass omnipresent and a very well-crafted percussion by Will Herald. And the track travels between emotions, versatility and aggression — a full-blown anthem to close things out that even reminds me of modern post-black bands like MOL.

Juan Angel Martos 7.5



SUPERIOR RAGE (IT)

In Memoriam

WormHoleDeath, 2026

Well, boys and girls; today we are going to annoy a few people. Right-thinking types or bread-and-fish eaters or whatever the occasion calls for. That is what creative freedom means — or, as Anton Szandor LaVey preached in his "Satanic Bible", freedom. Because, despite what many think, said book does not speak of human sacrifices of babies or virgins, but rather of freedom in its many facets. Not being subject to certain restrictions imposed over many centuries. And it must be said as it is: The God of the Old Testament, the Jehovah of the Jews, was a mean-looking son of a bitch. Color and learn with Teo!

If we start reading the pages of some of the books that make up said testament, we see that as a deity, he was, to say the least, a bit of a bastard. Lot's wife, when they were fleeing the destruction of Sodom, he turned into a pillar of salt as punishment for looking back. He asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. He had Moses wandering through the desert for forty years without ever seeing the Promised Land. What one might call a delightful deity. Misogynist, genocidal and much more. No wonder that many restless minds who asked natural questions abandoned the idea of that god or openly and frontally opposed it. And, as we already know, creative minds in general and musicians in particular found in that opposition a recurring theme in their creations. Yes, we are talking about the birth of Black Metal at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. And of that impulse that, even today, is still present in the musical sphere and counts with legions of followers throughout the entire world.

From Italy comes **SUPERIOR RAGE**, the project of Alessandro Bucci that has been operating since 2006 and that, in January of this year, published their latest EP "In Memoriam". It is true that it is a new recording of previous tracks and only features two new songs, but one must pay attention to them, to take the pulse of what is brewing in the cauldrons of hell.

"Indecent Condition" opens the work in an undogmatic manner,

with a savage and raw old-school Black Metal assault, without much ornament or filigree. Frontal, direct, rabid, although between the layers of boiling riffs, an orchestral accompaniment can be glimpsed. The same occurs with the following track, "Asmodeus Bacchic". Rabid riffs, bombing drums, a wall of sonic attack but also broader symphonic interludes perfectly assembled within the global concept of the track. And it is in the following track, "The Night of Rains", where one begins to see from the outset that tendency to expand the Raw Black concept with more orchestral elements that give this versatility to the **SUPERIOR RAGE** project. Speed is reduced, musicality is increased and different musical layers are interwoven to give the music an identity that, while not novel in concept, is recognizable to us. It is not pleasant (let us remember that it is still Black Metal), but elements and structures can be seen that show commitment and honesty. "Soleright" is one of the new tracks of the project and opens at a mid-tempo, with that twisted musicality that, for those of us who have managed to appreciate Black Metal, has the strange dichotomy of its beauty in its ugliness. The work closes with "The Death of the Red Dragon" with a solemn beginning that alternates passages of old-school Black Metal attack with more orchestral and symphonic interludes.

Nothing new under the sun, oh boys and girls. Black Metal with symphonic nuances. Although I also think: if the lukewarm bread-and-fish eaters have been going on for more than two thousand years with their old wives' tales about the son of a bitch who destroyed the Tower of Babel, sent a Flood or any of the other outrages recounted... why should there not exist an artistic expression like Black Metal for more than thirty years and a band like **SUPERIOR RAGE** for around twenty?

Cesar Luis Morales **8**



TARDIGRADE INFERNO (RU)

Hush

Autoeditado, 2026

Tardigrades, also known as water bears, are a series of living beings that, in some way, must be related to immortality. They are extremophile organisms, meaning resistant to extreme conditions.

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They can withstand pressures of 6,000 atmospheres (six bloody tons per square centimeter!) as easily as extreme temperatures, both cold and heat, or extreme radiation. Color and learn with Teo!

In short, and dispensing with scientific jargon: the tardigrade does not give a damn about anything. And it is natural that the band in question, **TARDIGRADE INFERNO**, has decided to include said little creature in their name, because judging by their proposition, they do not give a damn about anything either. Originally from Saint Petersburg (Russia) and currently based in Melbourne (Australia), their musical proposition is, to say the least, peculiar and contravenes a good handful of stylistic parameters and restrictions. They themselves define as Dark Cabaret Metal. Others will call it Avant Garde and others will call it... The thing is that tardigrades do not give a damn about anything.

"The Final Show" opens the work with a peculiar sound that will be the identifying mark of the band. Heavy riffs, a rhythm section as demolishing as a pile driver and the versatile and deep voice of Darya Pavlovich. But all of this accompanied by the arrangements of ghostly synthesizers. The same occurs with the following track, "Hide'n'Seek", which opens with a lunatic, very Nu Metal guitar that then offers a simple guitar solo, psychotic and effective. The overall sensation of the album, I warn you in advance, is like listening to "Kidnap the Sandy Claws", the track from the "Nightmare Before Christmas" soundtrack originally by KORN. Only the masters from Bakersfield have the ability to record a single track expressly for that film and have it become one of my favorites from their discography and the genre. And it is that strange blend of delirium, madness and continuous Halloween celebration that hooks you. Well, that is the sensation that remains after listening to "Hush" by **TARDIGRADE INFERNO**. And tracks like "Deadly Fairytales" carry that air I have described: heavy guitar blasts, solidity and synthesizer details that give the whole experience its vibe. "All in Your Head" is a clear exponent of the band's sound. The circus atmosphere, the ambience that wanders between delirium and heavy metal, the continuous Halloween celebration, the childlike choruses that suggest a severe mental disorder.

"Dead Fish Smile" has that lullaby air and it is as if the parents of the creature were EVANESCENCE and COAL CHAMBER (the ones of "Loco", remember?) for uniting disparate tendencies. More cinematic is the opening of "Subatomic Heist", although the track then develops into a short interlude that barely reaches three minutes. Where the most carnivalesque or cabaret-style or pro-Halloween madness

is unleashed is in the following track titled "I.C.D.". All the elements I have been describing — the psychotic guitars, the arrangements, the voice and the choruses, the atmosphere, the heavy metal — intermingle in a tremendous blow. But as we have already indicated on several occasions: water bears — or **TARDIGRADE INFERNO**, for that matter — do not give a damn about anything. "Goor" goes from a fairly heavy opening combining synthesizers with drum rolls to a swaggering mid-tempo thanks to those hi-hat counter-rhythms. I feel like I am listening to an unrealizable crossover between DRESDEN DOLLS and KORN, the impossible offspring of an affair between Jonathan Davis and Amanda Palmer, filmed by Tim Burton. And what do you say about the eponymous "Hush"? Let us dance and celebrate All Hallows' Eve throughout the entire year, for life is a carnival and tardigrades do not give a damn about anything. A brief piano interlude under the title of "Hypograph" leads us to the closing of the album with "I Am Eternal", perhaps the weakest track of the work and one that does not quite manage to be a good ending for the rest of the party that all the preceding tracks constitute. But well, you already know what tardigrades think about that.

So yes, oh boys and girls, there are people who have decided to live in Halloween Town, like Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King. As I indicated before, **TARDIGRADE INFERNO** are natives of Saint Petersburg and currently reside in Melbourne, but what is beyond doubt is that, regardless of the city in which they are based, they have decided to live in a permanent cabaret and have managed to pull it off and capture it in their musical version. And if you do not like their proposition? Well, you know — tardigrades do not give a damn about anything.

Cesar Luis Morales 9



THREAT SIGNAL (CA) Revelations

Agonia Records, 2026

After 9 years since "Disconnect" (2017), an album that left much to be desired within the discography of **THREAT SIGNAL**, they return with "Revelations", released by Agonia Records, going back to the essence that made

them grow — metalcore with alternative and progressive tinges. Ten new tracks is what the Canadians offer us, where Jon Howard is very comfortable across his wide range of vocal registers, as he demonstrates on the opener “The Great Tribulation”, in which the groovy rhythms are nuanced and the catchy melodies alternate between melodic and raspy.

It is impossible not to place them within the new metal wave, with tinges of TRIVIUM, BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE, ORBIT CULTURE... “Non-Essential” certifies the return with a more aggressive and direct cut, highlighting the work of Travis Montgomery on guitars with those addictive solos and demolishing rhythms — pay attention to the turn in the final section.

While “Exorcise the Demon” serves to create one of the choruses of the album, “Fire at Will” investigates the darker and heavier sounds of the band with a track full of dynamism and hard-hitting quality.

It is true that they invent nothing, but they return in fine style with a dozen cuts that would not be out of place at any European festival. “Death Will Find Us All” demonstrates this with tempo changes, addictive riffs where groove commands and a chorus perfect for singing along, as is equally the case with “Paralysis”, although this cut has a more modern air as does “NME”. They are fine, for the younger crowd, but something is missing.

However, “Revelations” has an extra point, recalling old times, and stands out in this final stretch of the work where we also find “Hell and Back” and “Live for You”, two emotional and youthful mid-tempos in which **THREAT SIGNAL** attempts to adapt to the new times.

Juan Angel Martos 7



TX2 (US) End of Us

Hopeless Records, 2026

What began as the work of a single person (Evan Thomas, singer and founder) has ended up being an album by an entire band with high-level collaborations that place them on the map.

TX2 began with the music that Evan published on his own across different social networks. Over time other members joined

and they gained a recognition that has led them to perform as support for ICE NINE KILLS, with whom they have a collaboration on this very album: “M.A.D.”. In it the styles of the two bands co-exist perfectly, creating a perfect balance between both that can be perceived throughout the entire track without stepping on each other at any moment. In fact, the influence of ICE NINE KILLS is felt from the very first seconds with very powerful guitars and drums that contrast with the brief choruses that announce the title of the track.

But this is not the only collaboration on “End of Us”, as they also collaborate with other established bands such as MAGNOLIA PARK on “Murder Scene” or other emerging artists who are also gaining recognition such as DEATHBYROMY. In fact, “Feed”, which is the collaboration they have with her, is my favorite of all of them. It is one of the darkest songs on the entire album, both for its lyrics and its instrumental. Both the vocals and the guitars find moments to be melodic, but also to be distorted and tear screams from the back of the throat.

They have one more collaboration worthy of mention, which in this case is the one that gives the album its title: “The End of Us”, alongside BLACK VEIL BRIDES. It is the only ballad on the entire record, although the sound of BLACK VEIL BRIDES and Andy’s voice are barely present.

As for the style of **TX2** itself, we can find it in songs like “Hostage”, “The Rain”, “Lost Souls” or “Die Alone”. Fast drum hits without needing a double bass drum, distorted guitars at times and with a clean sound at others, high-pitched yet raspy vocals that tend to throw in the occasional deep guttural from time to time, and choruses. Quite a few choruses.

In general, a sound very similar to what FALLING IN REVERSE had fifteen years ago (and many other bands of the time), but adapted to the present day and with a slight — and I emphasize slight — darker touch. Put another way: if you were emo around 2010, “End of Us” is going to appeal to you.

Irene Gaona 8.5



UNBURIER (GB) As Time Awaits

Autoeditado, 2026

On February 27th, 2026, the new **EP** by Technical Death Metal act **UNBURIER** appeared in digital format. The work took the name of “As Time Awaits”.

Ben Champion (vocals and guitar), Blake Hibberd (guitar and vocals), Stan Mitchell (bass) and Kim Hughes (drums) are the men behind the project in question.

Broadly speaking, I see two problems with the record that takes center stage in these pages: its short duration and the fact that it ends. Beyond that, we are faced with an assault that is simply and plainly perfect. Truly, what a thing. The English have a class that is out of the ordinary, exhibiting across the three tunes that make up the Extended Play an exquisite instrumental technique, where violence joins it forming an absolutely lethal tandem. Of course, here everything is up to the mark, from a contemporary and impeccable sound to an artwork that is as macabre as it gets.

Complicated, furious and elegant are the six strings. The rich showcase of riffs could not be better. Of course, double harmonies are not absent, nor are solos with melodic tinges that will leave your jaw on the floor.

The vocal department shamelessly displays two growl registers, one deeper than the other. What it does not show, and for which I am endlessly grateful, is clean vocals. Good on them.

On the other hand, the bass breaks every mold on the harrowing “Abyssal Uncertainty”. A tremendous performance from Stan Mitchell there.

Dynamic to the point of bordering on madness is the percussion. Mr. Hughes is a beast behind his drum kit. He will just as readily destroy your spine with blasts of blast beats as shatter your skulls with mid-tempos as rocky as a concrete block. Do you want directional changes? If the answer is yes, you are in luck — that is exactly what Kim is going to give you.

Of course I highlight and emphasize the entirety of the assault. If you have not yet tasted “As Time Awaits”, I do not know what you are waiting for. Among the best of the year — there, I said it.

Jesús Muñoz Caballero 10



UNEARTHLY RITES (FI) Tortural Symphony of the Flesh

Svart Records, 2026

From Svart Records comes the new work of the Finns **UNEARTHLY RITES**, “Tortural Symphony of the Flesh”, a band that expands their music to the struggle for nature, ethnicities and minorities through a dense and dark crust death.

Their critique of capitalism and the oppression of the rich begins with a descent into the land of the dead, “Tuonen tulijat, manan menijät”, where the slow and heavy rhythm created by Simo and Santtu is perfectly accompanied by the otherworldly shrieks of Sesli.

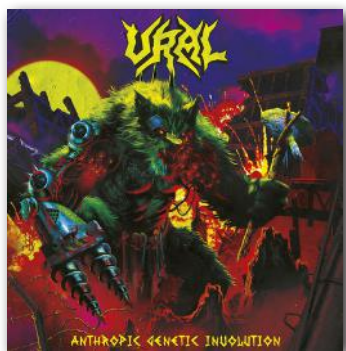
On “Sokli Fields Forever / A Radiative Picnic” the tempo and aggression rise with a combo of Jennika (bass) and Tapio (drums) in complete harmony, as is equally the case with the title track “Tortural Symphony of the Flesh”, drawing from the classics of the 80s and 90s — the moment the guitar solo kicks in, the vintage sound makes it clear that these musicians have consumed a great deal of musical material.

The album presents two instrumentals that seem to divide it into three parts and two tracks that exceed the average in length, “Ignis Fatuus” and the closer “The Notion of Emerging Totalitarianism”. The first cut seems like more of the same at the outset, then surprises everyone with a maelstrom of aggression and pain where the gutturals intermingle with the screams to create the most aggressive cut of the entire album — a true anthem.

This cut follows in the footsteps of “Metalli, liha, kone” (metal, flesh, machine) — from the title you already know what it deals with — an ode to the meat industry and its bad practices, extrapolated with pain and an atmosphere that turns your stomach. If **UNEARTHLY RITES** profess death metal on “Absurd Transgression”, they lend it a groovy and modern air that turns it into a perfect 10 anthem, and this second part of the album elevates the level of the heavier and more monotonous first part.

After “Not for the Weak”, an asynchronous instrumental, we arrive at the close with “The Notion of Emerging Totalitarianism”, in which they seem to condense everything heard previously — heavy guitars where the rhythms flood your head with headbanging, a deranged voice full of rage, smooth rhythm changes, metal solos everywhere and an oppressive atmosphere. This is **UNEARTHLY RITES**.

Juan Angel Martos 7.5



URAL (IT) Anthropic Genetic Involution Xtrem Music, 2026

URAL return with their most ambitious and sharp work to date. "Anthropic Genetic Involution" is not only a logical continuation of their trajectory, but a statement of intent: the Italian band wants to sound fiercer, more technical and more unpredictable, without losing the old school essence that has always characterized them. Here there are no concessions, but there is a clear compositional evolution that can be perceived from the very first riff.

The production of Davide Billia is one of the pillars of the record. Crisp, sharp and hard-hitting sound, without losing the rawness necessary for the crossover to breathe. The mix allows each instrument to strike with clarity, especially the guitars, which here acquire absolute prominence.

The album opens with "Extreme Paranoia", an immediate adrenaline discharge that recovers the Bay Area spirit with cutting riffs, group choruses and a solo that smells of classic metal. It is a perfect calling card: **URAL** remain a direct thrash band, but now they play with more layers, more nuances and more intention. The riffs become more angular, more dissonant, with a Voivodian influence that appears in cuts such as "God of Lies", where the band explores less linear structures and a groove that adds dynamism without sacrificing aggression.

The voice of Andrea Calviello proves more versatile than in previous works. His register remains corrosive and direct, but now incorporates melodic nuances and modulations that fit with the greater compositional variety of the album. On tracks such as "Break the Fall" or "Rat in a Cage", his performance contributes that crossover touch that invites moshing and keeps the energy in constant ascent.

The central block of the record is where **URAL** demonstrate that they have decided to take risks. "Wrong Children" is an exercise in technical and frantic thrash, full of tempo changes, chained riffs and very well-crafted solos that require several listens to capture everything that is happening. It is one of the most complex cuts and, at the same time, one of

those that best reflects the evolution of the band. "Open Scars" and "Wasteland" balance things out with more direct structures, mid-tempo riffs and a compact execution that reinforces the cohesion of the album.

The surprise arrives with "Flat Black", a jazz-metal reinterpretation of the classic by J.J. Johnson. It is a bold, unexpected and refreshing move that demonstrates that **URAL** are not afraid to break the mold. Far from feeling out of place, the track fits as a creative breath of fresh air within an album dominated by speed and aggression.

The final stretch with "Terror Eyes" and "...to Change Your Vision" closes the record with force and atmosphere. The first is one of the fiercest cuts on the album, ideal for the live setting; the second functions as a brief and ambient outro that leaves a sensation of calculated closure.

Looking for points that could be improved, perhaps the risk that the band, despite their evident evolution, may remain in a comfort zone if they do not delve even further into the progressive influences they have added on this album. It is also noted that "Wrong Children" may feel somewhat saturated on first listens due to the number of ideas it contains. These are nuances, not structural flaws.

As a whole, "Anthropic Genetic Involution" is a ferocious, varied and technically solid album. **URAL** have achieved a balance between tradition and evolution, between the energy of crossover and the complexity of thrash, between rawness and precision. It is, without a doubt, their most complete work and the one that best defines their current identity.

Luis Martínez **8**



VOMITORY (SE) In Death Throes Metal Blade Records, 2026

Thirty-seven minutes. That is all **VOMITORY** needs to remind you why they remain one of the most steadfast institutions of Swedish death metal. "In Death Throes" is not a comeback, because the band already returned in 2023; it is a confirmation, a dry blow on the table that demonstrates that, even after decades, they continue operating with the same brutality, the same ethic

and the same total absence of concessions.

The production of Lawrence Mackrory is excellent and one of the pillars of the album: organic, raw, but with sufficient clarity for each instrument to breathe within the chaos. There are no modern artifices, no overprocessing; it is the type of sound **VOMITORY** has always defended, but with a contemporary polish that amplifies the punch without stripping away the filth.

The contribution of new guitarist Christian Fredriksson is evident. It does not transform the identity of the band — something that would be unthinkable — but it does introduce dynamism, more incisive solos and a greater variety in the riffs, which move between the sharpest Swedish death metal and the thrash influence that has always been present in their DNA. Urban Gustafsson maintains his role as rhythmic architect, while Tobias Gustafsson once again demonstrates why he is one of the most solid drummers in the genre: constant blast beats, demolishing double bass drum and an innate ability to alternate frenzy with dense sections without losing fluidity.

Erik Rundqvist, for his part, continues with his habitual register: cavernous, direct growl without frills, occasionally reinforced by a second voice that increases the sensation of violence. His bass, more present on this album, contributes body and density on tracks where the guitar opens space for minimal breathing before returning to the devastation.

Delving into the music, the album opens with "Rapture in Rupture". The opening is a statement of intent: speed, aggression and riffs that cut like blades. It is one of the most complete tracks on the album, with a solo that recovers the thrash vibe of their earliest influences.

"For Gore and Country" — here appears the first "hit" of the record. Alternation between fast sections and heavy groove, catchy riffs and a structure that functions as an anchor for the rest of the album. **VOMITORY** in their purest state.

"Forever Scorned" has riffs that sound like a chainsaw, unfiltered Swedish violence and one of the most outstanding solos on the album. A direct, no-nonsense track that fits perfectly within the classic line of the band.

"Wrath Unbound" is more melodic and dense, with a dark and catchy main riff. It is one of the cuts where Fredriksson's contribution on lead guitar can best be appreciated; at moments it has brought to my mind a certain "air" of BOLT THROWER.

"In Death Throes" is the title track and summarizes the identity of the album: balance between technique and brutality, solid composition and an execution that demonstrates the maturity

of the band.

"Two and a Half Men" is one of the most varied cuts on the record. Dynamic structure, punchy bass and a compositional approach that brings freshness without breaking the essence.

"Oblivion Protocol" functions as a perfect closer: melodic introduction that leads into an explosion of violence. Atmospheric, devastating and with a final sense of closure that rounds off the album.

"In Death Throes" is an album that does not attempt to reinvent anything, because **VOMITORY** has never needed to do so. Its strength resides in coherence, in absolute fidelity to a style they have perfected over decades. Here there is Swedish death metal in its purest, most violent and most honest form, executed by a band that continues to be an institution of the genre.

A solid, ferocious and direct work that confirms that **VOMITORY** continues to be an obligatory reference in the European extreme. Brutality without concessions, impeccable production and an execution that demonstrates that, even in 2026, they continue operating with the same intensity as in their early years.

Luis Martínez **9**



WARSIDE (FR) Cognitive Extinction Gruesome Records, 2026

Under the title "Cognitive Extinction" the debut album of the French band **WARSIDE** goes on sale. A suggestive title that perfectly portrays the current state of planet Earth, where any coherent or reasonably sane thought has practically ceased to exist. **WARSIDE** have very aptly chosen to use said title to offer us what is their debut record, perfectly molding and fusing their music with the name used to christen the album. And the fact is that, musically speaking, what these French musicians show us is a sonic piece composed of eight songs, where the battering of the human being for their absurd practices of playing God with technology, psychological abuse or the decadence in their attitudes as a species are effectively captured in this work. For this, with such a pertinent and topical argument, **WARSIDE** has provided a perfectly chosen

soundtrack to wrap around this concept. With such delicate, absurd and brutal contemporary themes, we can only hope that the packaging of "Cognitive Extinction" is in keeping with what is shown, and what better way to do it than brutally and directly, which is exactly how these French musicians have done it.

This record, to guide you in some way, is a piece of tremendously direct, furious and brutal Death Metal. It is as if we took patterns designed by bands like MISERY INDEX, ABORTED, DYING FETUS or CATTLE DECAPITATION and added a few small drops from the sonic flask elaborated by bands like SUFFOCATION, SEVERE TORTURE or VADER on the Death side. A proposition that is not novel, but that does contain freshness enough to be assimilated as something surprising. As we say, the record is brutal, energetic, fast and hard-hitting, where we can give a certain voice or prominence to the drum work carried out by Thomas Jarret. This aspect has been almost crucial for this "Cognitive Extinction" to sound with the hard-hitting quality it does. A notable performance that should not be overshadowed by that of his bandmates, who in their respective roles pass with distinction, but where, as we point out, the drum and cymbal department stands out.

A record that passes at lightning speed and with the force of a freight train running over you. Eight songs designed to leave no one unmoved, showing the path along which a record that wants to remain alive must travel and fight among all the similar releases that come out every year within the same style.

A work that could give **WAR-SIDE** a certain weight among the bands pigeonholed in their genre. The record has solid arguments to create a certain stir among the followers of the bands mentioned above. A debut album that could not have arrived in better fashion. Without being known quantities, **WAR-SIDE** can slip through any crack thanks to this work dedicated to the cognitive extinction of the human being.

F. 8



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