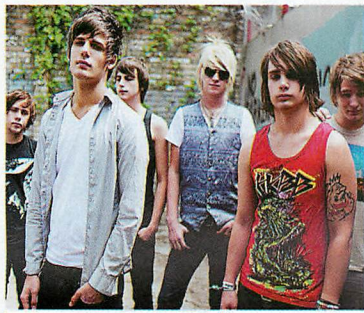


gentlemen again. The anguish is over with Inverloch's debut mini-album *Dusk...Subside*, an effort that sounds both modern and dated. Matthew Skarajew (guitar) and Paul Mazziotta (drums) carry over from the legendary band out of which Inverloch evolved, and their new mates plan to perform both with new work and live DISEMBOWELMENT classics. The three new cuts on this appetizer indicate this band could end up being the more interesting of the two, with Ben James proving to be excellent when handling the lurching doom and blistering death metal. "Within Frozen Beauty" has a watery texture to it, almost like early Neurosis, before it dissolves into chaos. "The Menin Road" seems to pay some homage to their country mates Mournful Congregation, as they lean heavily into a funeral dirge. Closer "Shadows of the Flame" starts with a slower pace before it blows up and gets old-school menacing. This stuff feels really right, and their future seems positively grim. ~ *Brian Krasman*



I SEE STARS
Digital Renegade
(SUMERIAN)

9

ELECTRONICORE GETS HEAVY: On *Digital Renegade*, the third album from I See Stars, the Michigan sextet delivers another primer on how to artfully combine incompatible genres of music into something vital and interesting. Having already established themselves as pioneers of electronicore—the intersection of electronica and post-hardcore—I See Stars has again wandered out onto the skinny branches, this time incorporating lashing torrents of punishing metallic riffage into their digital grooves, with effective results. "Filth Friends Unite," the first single, showcases frenzied techno beats and post-hardcore vocals, injected with death metal growls and armor piercing guitar riffs. Danny Worsnop, vocalist with Asking Alexandria, guests on "Endless Sky," a shimmering rave party full of blistering fretwork and guttural vocals, and "N2T48" is a pulsating, electro industrial feast. Thankfully, the same sound is not regurgitated from song to song. "Gnars Attacks," "Electric Forest," and the title track stand out for unique blends of vocals, beats, and the right measure of ferocity. Bands that merge different styles into one sound often fail because they attempt too much and lose direction. I See Stars avoids this pitfall by keeping the focus on the melody, resulting in a memorable collection of addictive grooves. ~ *Joe Daly*

JOB FOR A COWBOY
Demonocracy
(METAL BLADE)

9

SOLID DEATH METAL: At this point of their career, Job for a Cowboy is a firm veteran of the death metal scene, but that's not to suggest they should be shipped off to the land where metal bands go to die. The band has issued

three albums and three EPs, and they supply fans with solid extreme metal on a consistent basis. In the process, they have established themselves as the gold standard, and they still play with the fury, aggression, and most importantly, the skill of their earlier works. On *Demonocracy*, Job for a Cowboy continues to dole out brutal death metal on each and every song, leaving your ears bruised and bloodied. *Demonocracy* is nine tracks of venom and vitriol that you couldn't harness with a steel plated lasso, and if a slaughterhouse had a soundtrack, it would sound like "Children of Deceit," "Imperium of Wolves," "Tongueless and Bound," and "Black Discharge." These are meaty, metallic slabs. Throughout, there are no moments of clarity. They deliver a full-on throttling, like a violent brawl that doesn't last a mere few moments but for the entirety of nine songs. Even with lineup changes, such as the addition of guitarist Tony Sannicandro, Job for a Cowboy has never drifted off course. *Demonocracy* is a mean album, full of riffs, squalls, and throaty roars that is as metallic as ever. ~ *Amy Sciarretto*

LONEWOLF
Army of the Damned
(NAPALM)

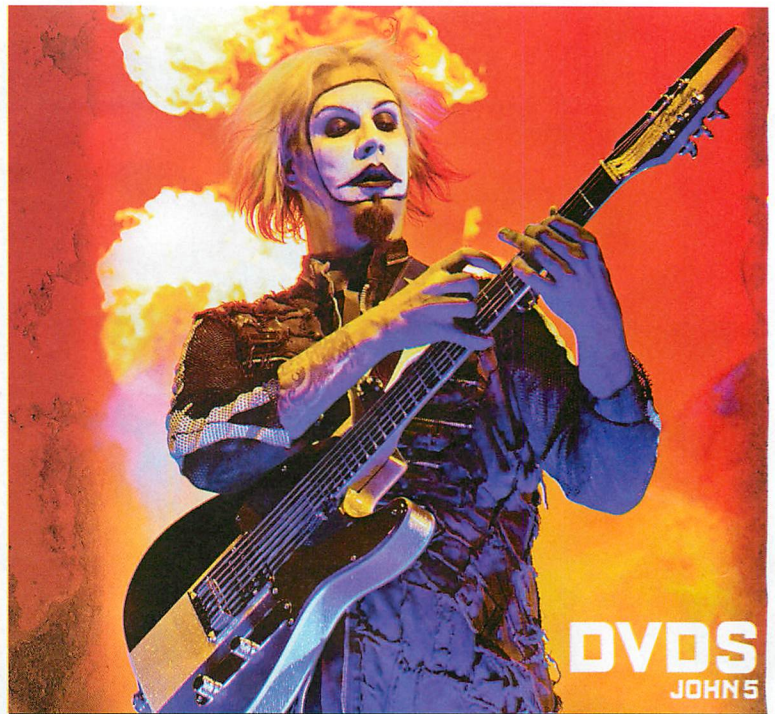
9

FRENCH POWER METAL: The galaxy of rock 'n' roll can loosely be separated into two groups—those bands whose success depends on evolution and reinvention, and the ones who craft a legacy by unleashing the same formula across a slate of albums. France's power metal crusaders Lonewolf has gloriously reveled in the latter category since forming in the early 90s. The band broke up briefly, reforming in 2000 and going on to release four full-length power metal feasts, with their fifth, *Army of the Damned*, marking their debut with Napalm Records. Comparisons to Germany's Running Wild and Grave Digger are dead on, although Lonewolf has pounded their sound over the anvil, forging their own bruising brand of power metal and infusing enough speed to attract the approving nod of Motörhead fans. Catchy melodies and gigantic choruses abound, but what gives *Army of the Damned* its epic feel is the majestic fretwork, with equal doses of nuclear riffing and soaring, triumphant leads that tell stories as vividly as the lyrics. Opening battle cry "Lonewolf" kicks off the raid with an aggressive speed metal assault that rides hard through its final smoking note. "Hellbent for Metal" is a joyous, unapologetic ode to the NWOBHM, and closer "One Second in Eternity" leaves you wishing the battle were just a few songs longer. ~ *Joe Daly*

JEFF LOOMIS
Plains of Oblivion
(CENTURY MEDIA)

8

GUITAR MASTERY: One of the most heart wrenching developments from the heavy metal world was the implosion of Nevermore's lineup. It wasn't exactly shocking, as turmoil haunted those guys for years, but the news that guitar wizard Jeff Loomis would be leaving the fold and striking out on his own was of the good/bad variety. It was sad a band as powerful and awesome as Nevermore would lose one of its most vital pieces, but at least Loomis could offer a follow-up to 2008's *Zero Order Phase*. Most of the songs on *Plains of Oblivion* sound like they might as well be cuts intended for the next Nevermore record. This isn't a display of silly guitar wankery, but instead it's a razor-sharp, inspired slab of mostly instrumental metal that



JOHN 5
God Told Me To
(ROCKET SCIENCE)

9

SHREDDING DIVERSITY: Don't let John 5's image conscious status as current Rob Zombie and former Marilyn Manson guitarist fool you. The guy is a supreme axe talent. Those are qualities more apparent than ever on CD/DVD combo *God Told Me To*. A thoroughly satisfying affair for rock/metal fans and shred heads alike, *God Told Me To* sees John 5 demonstrating not just his considerable electric talents, but also an impressive acoustic side. In fact, the acoustic material is every bit as compelling, especially in terms of the man's ability to match beauty with backbone. Watching the fret master on the DVD get his acoustic groove on, while using the guitar body and a table as rhythm section is impressive. It is one of several entertaining moments that features John 5 recording the new material in the studio and plying his wares on stage. But it is retro horror host Mike Odd whose commentary and hilarious campy cool skits that really makes the DVD. As always, John 5's electric instrumentals offer plenty of firepower without ever losing sight of the song, the terrific cover of Michael Jackson's "Beat It" a definite high point. Recorded and produced by John 5, Chris Baseford (Rob Zombie), and Bob Marlette (Black Sabbath), and featuring cover illustration by Rob Zombie, *God Told Me To* is an absolute blast. ~ *Scott Alisaglu*

the era in which it was recovered. In addition to a PiL rendition of Sex Pistols classic "Anarchy in the UK," the *gig* showcases the band's primal brand of forward thinking musicality and punk experimentalism, as played by a tight group of musicians and led by the oddly charismatic and ever sardonic Lydon. Opening and closing with the straightforward post-punk "Public Image" and including a version of "(This Is Not a) Love Song," as well as boundary benders "Annalisa," "Low Life," and tribally percussive "Under the House," the set provides a cross section of material that demonstrates just how far out there Lydon would take it. A brief interview section with Lydon is a nice touch, though hardly comprehensive. Those desiring to know what PiL was all about would do well to grab a copy of this one. ~ *Scott Alisaglu*

THE RACONTEURS
Live at Montreux 2008
(EAGLE ROCK)

8

HIGH DEFINITION ALT-ROCK: Formed in 2005 by Jack White, Brendon Benson, Patrick Keeler, and Jack Lawrence, The Raconteurs released two top 10 albums that attracted the drooling adoration of hipsters across the globe before the band's various members scattered off into side-project purgatory. The band's future is murky, but in 2008 on the heels of their second album, *Consolers of the Lonely*, The Raconteurs enjoyed a reputation as one of the most exciting live bands, and this concert illustrates why. Released on DVD and Blu-ray, this film of their 2008 Montreux Jazz Festival appearance is stuffed with 14 of the band's greatest hits, plus two covers. Opening with "Consolers of the Lonely," the band streaks onto the stage and ignites a furious explosion of jazz dissonance before gliding into the verse. "Keep It Clean," a Charley Jordan cover, packs high energy and juicy grooves that flow so organically that the uninitiated could mistake it for an original. "Steady, As She Goes" showcases their ability to remain loose enough to improvise while playing tightly enough to build momentum. "Blue Veins" closes the main set with a spaced out jam that sets the stage for the four encores, including a scorching version of "Broken Boy Soldier." A high definition snapshot of an outstanding live band in their prime. ~ *Joe Daly*

PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED
Live at Rockpalast
(MADE IN GERMANY / MVD)

8

PUNK FORWARD: Oppositional defiant and dangerously intelligent, John Lydon had more to offer the world than what his defunct UK punk unit did. He formed Public Image Limited in 1978 and never looked back, releasing several albums that merged multiple genres, from punk to reggae to new wave. *Live at Rockpalast* captures Lydon in his element during a PiL performance for German television. Released in the US through MVD, the sound and picture quality are surprisingly strong, considering