

# DECIBEL

## **Kult ov Azazel - Destroying The Sacred**

The kult is alive.

When covering American black metal, the press favors one-man outfits. Their personalities are striking, their music has crossover appeal and they depart from the traditional Norwegian paradigm. Still, a handful of American bands have slogged it out through the years. Notables include Absu, Averse Sefira and Kult ov Azazel. "Band" is the operative word here. The advantage these collectives have over lone wolves is power. Misanthropy is the currency; more people wield more of it.

Florida's Kult ov Azazel are the most Scandinavian-sounding of the lot. The sound is Swedish, actually think Marduk or Dark Funeral. Their blast-beaten, tremolo-picked, vocally-scathed style hasn't changed much in a decade. Production values, though, have fluctuated, carrying the band's fortunes with them. Debut full-length *Triumph of Fire* sounded surprisingly decent. 2005's *The World, The Flesh & The Devil* drowned in muck.

Mana Studios, which recorded *The World* redeems itself on *Destroying The Sacred*. The sound is tight and focused, exposing the band's most coherent tunes to date. Drummer John Goss is on fire, sprinkling spicy cymbal accents and feverish fills over astonishing foot speed. Vocals, which were often overbearing before, sit comfortably in the mix. Guitars are alternately mournful and storming. There's even a punky cover of Nuclear Assault's "Hang The Pope." For once, these are black metal tunes one can tell apart. They're also blasphemously consistent, taking on Christians, Muslims and Judeans with equal malevolence. The song remains the same but it's more relevant than ever.

7/10 – Cosmo Lee