

**Avsky
Malignant
Moribund**



Maybe black metal fans have dismissed Avsky as derivative, unimaginative, cliché and completely unnecessary. As true as all those statements may be, *Malignant* is a thoroughly enjoyable outing. It's true that Avsky pretty much cop an oldschool black metal feel in the vein of Hellhammer, Burzum and Darkthrone with mid-paced raw grooves and screeching hellish vocals, but they do it well and make for a rewarding listen. Indeed, the album's title track boasts Celtic Frost-like riffs with a Scandinavian BM bent and screams à la Burzum's Varg Vikernes or Shining's Niklas Kvarforth. Perhaps a less obvious comparison is Khold and their *Masterpiss Of Pain* album.

Malignant offers nothing new to an already saturated scene and will almost undoubtedly be completely forgotten before 2009, but it is an enjoyable album for now, and sometimes that is good enough. [avsky.tk] — JWW

**Endless Dismal Moan
Ruin
Blackmetal.com**



From the country that brought us Sigh comes another rabid slice of protean experimental black metal weirdness. Screams from deep inside madhouse walls meet beehive guitars and monotonous keyboards. The resulting mongoloid-like musical aberration will have you reaching for the Thorazine to purge the primal din.

Remember the rundown madhouse in the movie *12 Monkeys* where the patients walk around in a sedative fugue? It's like they've commandeered instruments and decided to cut an album. The songs all blend together in one cathartic belch. Chaos9 doesn't seem to be recording music as much as coping with a grave existential plight in the studio. The cover art of a locked door is truly appropriate for this album: The harrowing screams and cacophonous lunacy should be

**Zodiak
Sermons
Translation Loss**

With members of Rosetta (vocalist/sampler Mike Armine), Slacks (vocalist/guitarist/Translation Loss co-owner Christian McKenna and acoustic guitarist/pianist/producer Mick Mullin), Javelina (bassist Herb Jowett), Balboa and Elder (drummer/also a co-owner of Translation Loss, Drew Juergens), Zodiak is high in the running for Most Incestuous Scene Band this side of Hail!Hornet. Obviously, these guys all being from the Philadelphia area, in bands on the same label, have all known each other for years, and while that shows on *Sermons*, it's the identity of *this band* as a whole that shines through even more than the evidence of its component parts. That is to say, Zodiak is more than just the people who comprise it.

The vocal interplay between Armine and McKenna is a central factor in many of the songs, with Armine's throaty rasp and McKenna's questing and thoughtful Maynard James Keenan-style delivery bouncing off each other on top of the kind of heavy ambience that serves as a reminder of why post-metal blew up in the first place. The variety in instrumentation and samples keeps things moving, and although there's just as much quiet contemplation on *Sermons* as there is distorted metalgaze bludgeoning, the album is never fully at rest or complacent in itself. The band seems to be set on an exploration, feeling their way through these eight tracks with a gripping intensity that's as effective as anything you're likely to hear these days come out of a band with a -sis on the end of their name. A welcome debut. [translationloss.com] — JJ Koczan

kept inside. Here's the sound of the abyss from perhaps the best-named band in recent memory. If you are looking for the soundtrack to a complete mental breakdown here it is. Contact a therapist before pressing play. [Ed's note — On June 25th, Chaos9 took his own life. MM wishes to extend its deepest condolences to his family, friends and fans. Rest in peace.] [myspace.com/endlessdismalmoanedm] — Justin M. Norton

**Malevolent
Creation
Live At The Whiskey
A Go Go
Arctic**



As the liner notes so aptly explain, *Live At The Whiskey A Go Go* was originally intended to be a DVD release. In keeping with Malevolent Creation's legendary runs of bad luck, only one VHS tape of poor quality was found and ended up being "destroyed during the digitizing process." Instead, you get another Malevolent Creation live album that, in all likelihood, only the diehard fans will want.

From the standpoints of pure energy and performance quality, *Live At The Whiskey A Go Go* is an ace release. Recorded during the Los Angeles stop of a tour supporting *The Fine Art Of Murder*, the set unsurprisingly includes several tunes from said album, including "To Die Is At Hand," "Manic Demise," "Mass Graves," "Scorn," and the title track, alongside classics like "Multiple Stab Wounds" and "Eve Of The Apocalypse." Brett Hoffman has a particularly good night, sounding like a rabid dog and inciting crowd violence at every turn. Drummer Dave Culross is a beast as well. Now if you could actually *hear* guitarists Phil Fasciana and Rob Barrett, and bassist Gordy Simms, *Live At The Whiskey A Go Go* would be a damn fine live disc. Though you'll get used to the high-vocals-to-low-guitar mix, primarily because Hoffman *makes* you, it's still a bummer that some of the best riffs and solos are buried. Speaking as a fan, I'd probably still purchase *Live At The Whiskey A Go Go*, as the sound quality is not *that* bad. Everyone else should grab a copy of 2004's *Conquering South America* for a good, career-spanning Malevolent Creation live album, provided you're cool with Kyle Symons singing the Hoffman staples. [malevolent-creation.com] — Scott Alisoglu

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