

bass line that makes for an extremely energetic and bright track. "Curiosity Kills" is heavy, fast and catchy. With this album Trapt has matured into a band capable of moving into a unique style and sound.

NICK DURCHOLZ | RATING: 3.9

MONO

Hymn To The Immortal Wind

(Temporary Residence)



10 years and 5 albums have now passed for Japanese quartet Mono, and in that time they have cemented themselves as one of the world's foremost purveyors of sad and melodic guitar sturm-und-drang. This group's wistful, gentle side is gorgeously emotive, full of wild-eyed wonder and quiet introspection. In songs like the opener, "Ashes In The Snow", the peacefulness builds, then gives way to massive thunderclaps of dissonant noise and bombastic crescendos. And the presence of a full orchestra makes for an even more heightened attack -- strings, flutes, pianos, the works -- meld into Mono's traditional rock setup effortlessly. It all engages in a precise, well-mapped out series of dynamic, omnipotent, and dense instrumental passages, sometimes sad, but just as often brimming with a strong sense of hopefulness. Indeed, Mono is a force to be reckoned with. Production here is once again handled by the inimitable Steve Albini (veteran of too many Indie bands to mention), who gives the group a very live, organic, and analog sound that is unaffected by studio trickery - what you hear is what you get. And what you get? Crushing, magnificent power framed by delicate passages of sustained splendor. "Hymn To The Immortal Wind" is monolithic, triumphant and, in one word, remarkable.

TODD ZACHRITZ | RATING: 4

RED

Innocence and Instinct

Sony Music

(www.innocenceandinstinct.com)



As a whole this album is nothing out of the unusual. Red is a fairly young band and there is definite potential in all aspects of their music. It is also very clear that these guys are very passionate about their music, which is a trait every great musician should have. Musically they all play off of each other very well and composition wise, they are tight and very structured. The band lived through a tragic car wreck and obviously still knows how to kick ass. If anything Red would be a force to be reckoned with live in concert. The energy on the album seems particularly tailored for live performance. "Fight Inside" is a brutal and beautiful track, incorporating strings as a back drop to intense vocals and snarling guitar. "Death of Me" is a solid track with the same ugly but soaring sound. "Never be the Same" begins with a liquid, melancholy guitar riff and transforms into a meaningful track of lost love and nostalgia. The men of Red have true talent but their sound is not complete. They have found a couple variations that sound great but all in all there is not enough variety on the album. If this band keeps at it, they could be a force to be reckoned with in the future.

NICK DURCHOLZ | RATING: 3.3

STEMM

Blood Scent

(Catch 22)

Raised in Buffalo, this modern metalcore act brings the thunder, with crystalline radio-ready production and a sound that brings to mind Pantera and Metallica - both enviable (though predictable) inspirations. The group's crunch is loud and aggressive, taking elements from heavy thrash as well as power-groove metal.



Standouts? How about the powerful opener, "Blood Soaked," which is a prime example of the group's synthesis of metallic styles. Songs like the midtempo "Beneath My Skin" fall pretty close to the mainstream, but it's all remedied with their cover of Nine Inch Nails' thrashy "Wish," which manages to harness the punchy, disheveled anger of the original. It's even followed up with an unexpected and grim experimental soundscape to close it out -- can't fault that. Taken as a whole though, "Blood Scent" is hard-hitting, mean, and covers just about everything you need in a new metal act. They may not take as many chances as I'd like to hear, but it's certainly a solid effort. If these guys don't catch on, it's a shame.

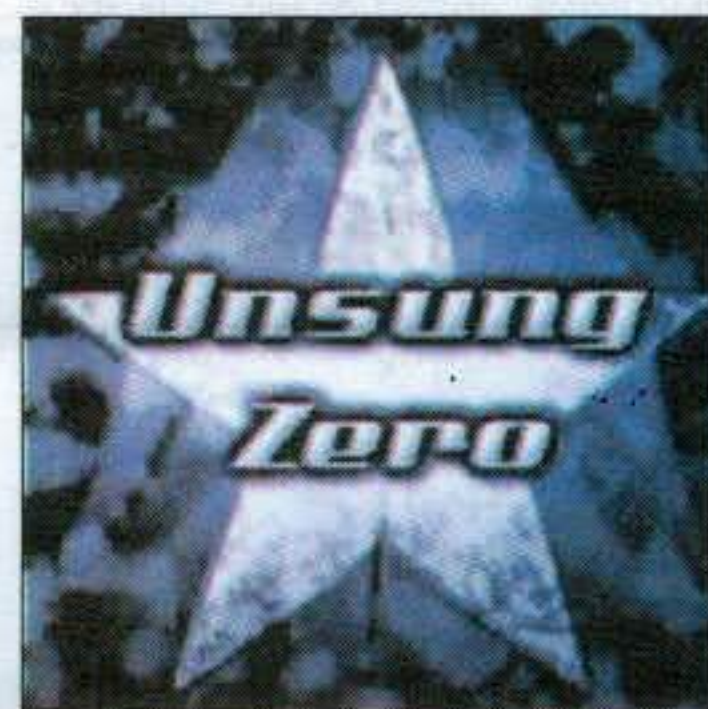
TODD ZACHRITZ | RATING: 2

UN Sung ZERO

Self-Titled

Self Produced

(www.myspace.com/USZERO)



This grassroots band comes from Birmingham, AL and is a migrant to Evansville area. They are looking to spread their own brand of sonic destruction across the southeastern United States. The musical variety and vocal range of this band are very impressive for their somewhat humble status. There is strong guitar composition, brutal drumming and harsh to melodic vocals. The lyrics however, are vague and somewhat generic. What makes Unsung