

most circumstances would be a detriment. But the Edenbridgers' ear for strong melodies, effective deployment of symphonic sounds, and Sabine Edelsbacher's sumptuously stacked vocal harmonies combine to create a gorgeous sea of metallic sound that, while certainly not being totally original, will sweep away listeners with a taste for this kind of epic ear-candy.

—Bryan Reesman

GNAW THEIR TONGUES
An Epiphanic Vomiting Of Blood
 Crucial Blast



In 1979, Belgian chamber-prog artists Univers Zero unleashed their album *Heresie*, calling it the "darkest" recording ever made. It's an inarguable masterpiece, whether you agree with its

hyperbolic reputation or not. In 2008, neighboring countrymen Gnaw Their Tongues, from the Netherlands, are giving UZ a run for their money with the thoroughly modern nightmare of sound that is *An Epiphanic Vomiting Of Blood*. The album is riddled with *Hellraiser* corridors of synths and strings, moaning voices from painful afterlives, an array of horrific samples, and interludes full of tension that runs like blood. Experimental industrial elements recall the best of Throbbing Gristle and Deutsch Nepal. The heaviest moods of doomsters like Khanate and Electric Wizard permeate alongside masterful gestures that ring of Wagner and Holst. If you enjoy being scared, overwhelmed, and backed into the deepest, darkest corners of your psyche, then Gnaw Their Tongues have a present for you.

—Nathan Carson

KAYO DOT
Blue Lambency Downward
 Hydra Head



Since disbanding the maudlin, beloved the Well, Toby Driver has continued to push his avant-metal in new directions over the course of two divisive albums under the Kayo Dot moniker. This third

full-length, and first for Hydra Head, seems designed to widen the divide between the two projects even further. The emotional outbursts that colored his early outings are almost completely gone, replaced by delicately structured compositions pulling more deeply from jazz and classical forms. Sometimes this approach works nicely — the drums and guitar bursting into "Clelia Walking" provide a dynamic rush — but too much of the album is spent

wandering without direction. The epic guitar solo that emerges from "Symmetrical Arizona" provides a decent payoff, but it doesn't quite justify the often boring crawl through the previous six songs. Driver's capable of making engaging music, but this album finds him disappearing too far into his own little world.

—Jonathan Lundeen

KHZ
Disconnected
 Propain/Cutting



Had KHZ been around 10 years ago, they might have been massive.

The industrialized/alt-metal arrangements, which follow paths laid out by the

likes of Fear Factory and Tool, are offset nicely by a distinct pop sensibility. The production is crystalline, and the New York-based band is fronted by a drop-dead gorgeous lead singer in Raiana Paige, who coos and pants all over this disc so much, you'll have to wipe the steam off your CD player. For the most part, it's an appealing package, Paige's raspy howl dominating tracks like "Fake Fool" and "Fight It," slow burner "Remember When" smartly avoiding the usual power ballad trappings in favor of a more unconventional, distorted arrangement by guitarist/producer Pull. Despite the band's effort, though, *Disconnected* can't help but come across a bit passé, the churning chords too predictable, the overtly hostile lyrics a little too banal, the mood too 1998.

—Adrien Bégard

KING'S X
XV
 Inside Out/SPV



When you've been in the business as long as King's X — that's 28 years and counting — you're not likely to offer many surprises.

That's certainly the case with *XV*, which doesn't bring anything to the

table their fans haven't heard before: funky bass and guitar elements, Dug Pinnick's highly dramatic vocals, and big riffs built around hooky song structures. Throw in some ambiguously spiritual themes in the lyrics, add a couple of proggy elements, and bam: the same King's X you've heard, well, 14 times before. But you know what? That's *okay*. People who like older King's X albums are gonna love this, because it does well all the things that they're good at, and with enough passion (see "Pray" and "Alright") that they can't be accused of going on autopilot.

It may not win them new fans, but the people who love them should eat this up.

—Leonard Pierce

KLIMT 1918
Just In Case We'll Never Meet Again
 Prophecy



The musical evolution of brothers Marco and Paolo Soellner has been fascinating; they've grown out of the progressive death metal of former band Another Day to their current project, which

started out exploring Goth metal and eventually moved on to embrace the cleaner yet similarly melancholic tones of classic 1980s darkwave.

With 2005's *Depoguerra*, the four-piece appeared to nail the sound they were after, an original combination of Katatonia's massive doom guitars and the somber ambience of Interpol. While the follow-up is by no means a failure, the band has completely done away with the Katatonia element, and in so doing has gone from being a mellower take on modern metal to being just another Coldplay/Muse imitator. Songs like "Skygazer" and "Just Another Interlude In Your Life" are lovely, but what's the point of it all, especially when Interpol's *Turn On The Bright Lights* does it all so much better?

—Adrien Bégard

MERCILESS DEATH
Realm Of Terror
 Heavy Artillery



I really do love my thrash, that's why I'm all for this recent resurgence in a genre left for dead not too long ago. Not only do we have the originators of the classic sound making their best

albums in years, but we have a whole new crop of upstarts like Merciless Death pulling their inspiration from all the right places. There is absolutely nothing original about *Realm Of Terror*, but these razor-sharp riffs and whiplash solos hit so precisely that there really isn't much reason to complain. Dan Holder ferociously abuses his axe throughout the album, growing only more wicked when drummer Cesar Torres matches his intensity on killer cuts like "Tormented Fate." The only thing keeping these guys from becoming top-tier revivalists is the monotonous gargle of Andy Torres, his strangled Lemmy impersonation more distracting than evil. That minor quibble aside, this is a thrilling little thrash album.

—Jonathan Lundeen