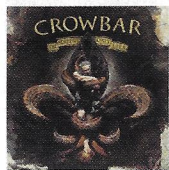


7
CROBOT
 Welcome to Fat City
 WIND-UP



8
CROWBAR
 The Serpent Only Lies
 EONE

Cros before bros
 The connection between Crowbot, an upstart Pennsylvania band with serious retro vibes, and Crowbar, the

sludgy metal vets who get dredged up from the swamps of Louisiana every few years, is tenuous.

The "Cro" part, sure (shame the Cro-Mags don't have a new album). But in their own ways, they've both perfected that nebulous idea of a "groove." Crowbot, who named their new album after a throwaway Hunter S. Thompson line about renaming Aspen, strike a bluesy, dirty pose. It's not as gravely as Clutch or spaced out like Monster Magnet (though "Hold On for Dear Life" gets the freak flag raised a bit), but it is unabashed, solid '70s rock love. Also: Solid cowbell action.

If Crowbot is driving music, Crowbar is more, uh, trudging along. Not in a bad way: Now on album 11, Kirk Windstein and co. keep perfecting the lumbering riff, which juxtaposes nicely with the band's sometimes speedier, occasionally hardcore rhythms. And the band certainly isn't "slowing down," though a line like "the pain in my body won't let me forget" suggests these guys won't last too much longer (sludgy since '89!).

Bonus points for the lyric "If you grow a set of balls, you might just change your life." That's affirmation for you.

So, two different bands, two different speeds. But two bands to, ahem, "cro" about.

—KIRK MILLER



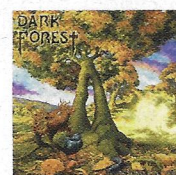
7
DANIEL LIONEYE
 Vol. III
 THE END

Hope I die tonight
 "More fuzz-guitar, more singing and less screaming," says Daniel Lioneye mastermind Linde Lindström of new album Vol. III. Normally in

Dicibel-land, an announcement like this by any band—unless it's Cave In or Neurosis or Baroness—is tantamount to treason. But the dreadlocked dude from Helsinki is pretty spot-on. Vol. III removes much of the abstract abrasion, painted with light strokes, that permeated its predecessor, Vol. II. Though three-fourths of Daniel Lioneye currently reside in superstars

HIM—inventors of the... the, uh, Heartagram—the two groups aren't terribly similar sonically. While HIM primes the wrist-slasher, Hot Topic soap opera pump, Daniel Lioneye mixes up (early) grunge, (super-mature stage) thrash, and (pre-Korn) groove metal to noteworthy effect. Vol. III ultimately reminds of Gruntruck or Paw caught up in Finland's aggro-arctic isolation. To that end, Lindström and team know they're not the most unique band on the planet, but with songs like "Blood on the Floor," "License to Defile," "Dancing with the Dead" and lead single "Ravensong," their conviction covers for lack of innovation.

While most of the songs on Vol. III focus on Lindström's pining vocals and typically Finnish lyrics (primo topics: depression and more depression), there are plenty of meaty, throaty riffs to sate fans of Deliverance-era Corrosion of Conformity or Louder Than Love-era Soundgarden—not that Daniel Lioneye sound like either. "License to Defile" and "Aetherside," for example, exhibit this all-eras, smorgasbord heavy rock approach, where mid-paced, thick riffs pivot easily into catchy choruses. There are the occasional outliers. "Mathematics of the Storm" has this weird Camel-esque end that'd make Andy Latimer smile a bit. Then there's "Alright," the album's sole salute to Finnish-ish death metal. Outside of scraping a few ideas off Ajattara, it's mostly forgettable, however. Vol. III finds Daniel Lioneye at an interesting crossroads. They have the chops to continue on, but with HIM as the breadwinner many times over, will Vol. IV really matter in the six years it'll take to make? —CHRIS DICK



6
DARK FOREST
 Beyond the Veil
 CRUZ DEL SUR MUSIC

Spruce things up
 God bless Cruz del Sur Music. Whether you care

for trad/power metal or not, you have to admit that every album released under their aegis absolutely radiates enthusiasm for the genre.

Case in point, Dark Forest (U.K.) who seem hardly able to contain their zeal on *Beyond the Veil*, tipping their hand immediately via an album cover directly lifted from Elvenking's 2004 *Wyrd* LP.

In light of that salvo, and press-release promises of "folk/medieval inspired" metal, it's surprising that Dark Forest's stylistic vocabulary is far more conventional than Elvenking's. It's also distinctly Teutonic. Running Wild and Gamma Ray seem to be Dark Forest's lodestars, as opposed to folksy eccentrics such as Korpiklaani or, say, Skyclad, (there are the occasional, obligatory nods to Maiden peppering this release as well.)

A workaday, slightly grainy production somewhat undersells *Beyond the Veil*, however, Dark Forest possess undeniable chops, boasting a laudably synergistic guitar duo along with an equally impressive rhythm section that favorably brings to mind blue-collar heroes Riot.

For some, vocalist Josh Winnard might prove to be more of an acquired taste. While he possesses a pleasant, exceedingly earnest voice, he utterly lacks authority, meaning that unlike Bruce Bruce, when Winnard slips on the occasional banana peel and slides helplessly out of key, it's less easy to overlook. Nevertheless, he capably delivers many well-crafted refrains, (the title track, "Where the Arrow Falls," "The Undying Flame") with a guileless charm that's difficult to entirely begrudge.

At album four, Dark Forest seem a tad long-in-the-tooth to still be running the old plays and formations of their idols. Nevertheless, *Beyond the Veil*'s classic-metal reenactment is nothing less than catnip for like-minded nostalgics. —FOREST PITTS



7
DARKTHRONE
 Arctic Thunder
 PEACEVILLE

It's only cold in your own shadow if you dwell there

To black metal purists, Darkthrone's primalism and corpse-painted aesthetic were synonymous with rebellion. Along with Mayhem and Emperor, they were Norway's second-wave incarnate. But during their 30 years together—including their brief Black Death phase—Nocturno Culto and Fenriz have never desperately clung to their most mimicked era in an effort to freeze 1992 into a three-decade blizzard. From death metal and crust punk to loose 'n' lethal NWOBHM, Darkthrone's stylistic whims reflect both their diverse tastes and their disinterest in reheating Transilvanian Hunger's leftovers. Now releasing their 16th LP (if you consider *Goatlord* a demo), *Arctic Thunder* is more than just another northern blaze.

Just like *Ravishing Grimness* pulled gasps from black metal lifers clutching their inverted-cross pendants in '99, *Arctic Thunder* embodies the moonlit mystique of black metal while skipping the blast beats. "Tundra Leach" romps in mid-paced stomps supercharged with trad metal attitude, while "Boreal Fiends" foregoes frostbitten tremolos and morphs into minimalist doom. Later, "Inbred Vermin" launches from simmering restraint to Motörhead's booze-breathed bombast. Despite the limitations of his reverb-saturated rasp, Darkthrone's decision to have Nocturno Culto