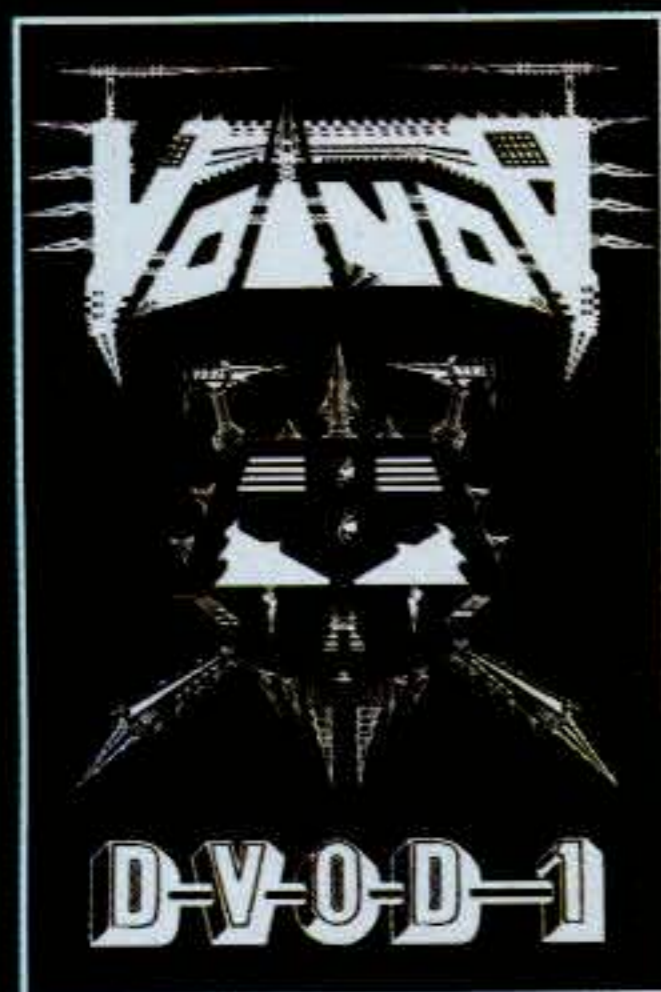


# AURAL ASSAULTS

continued

## Voivod D-V-O-D-1 MVD



Eerie that I end up getting this DVD shortly after the death of Denis "Piggy" D'Amour. A DVD review feels so insignificant in light of the passing of a legend. And it is Piggy's unorthodox style that is so readily apparent all over *D-V-O-D-1*, Voivod's first DVD.

The band was indeed ahead of its time, as this history-packed document of the original lineup of Piggy, vocalist Denis "Snake" Belanger, bassist Jean-Yves "Blacky" Theriault and drummer Michel Langevin demonstrates. Spanning the years 1983-1991, *D-V-O-D-1* is a nicely packaged affair that provides a representative sampling of the band's music through live performances, videos and in-studio footage.

Perhaps it was Piggy's death that forced my focus squarely on the man throughout the disc, but his talent as a groundbreaking progressive thrasher is without question. Watching the guy continuously reach down and pull out lop-sided chord after freak-out riff during a series of live performances in Montreal is as exciting as it is saddening.

*D-V-O-D-1* is tailor-made for the long-time fan. Inclusive of six videos (including video shoots for "Ravenous Medicine" and "Psychic Vacuum"), footage from the recording of *Nothingface* and audio-only recordings of the 1984 *Morgoth Invasion* and 1987 *Montreal Spectrum* live demos (both remastered by Piggy), stating that *D-V-O-D-1* is an essential purchase for Voivod worshippers is ridiculously understated. What a wonderfully fitting tribute to a true metal trailblazer. [<http://mvd2b.com>]  
— Scott Alisoglu

## Taake Doedskvad Karisma/Dark Essence

Norway's Taake took around four years to complete *Doedskvad*, the final chapter in the *Nattestid*... trilogy, and the results are expectedly Norwegian. Recorded at Grieghallen Studios (the Fredman of Norway) with Pytten *Doedskvad* retains all the trademarks of (kult!) Norwegian black metal — from its garage production to the frantic metallic folk melodies, *Doedskvad* fits perfectly between Immortal's *Diabolical Fullmoon Mysticism* and Enslaved's *Hordanes Land*. As such, Taake's third album offers no real surprises other than 50 minutes of passionately written black metal. There is one key differentiator, however. Unlike *Nattestid*... and *...Bjoergvin*... the seven songs are definitely more harmonic, even accessible in parts. For example, "Hordaland Doedskvad III" and "Hordaland Doedskvad IV" are nothing more than toe-tapping, stein-wavering folk music trapped in a singed black metal mindset; whereas "Hordaland Doedskvad II" and "Hordaland Doedskvad VII" parlay '70s heavy metal to combine with blasts of black metal traditionalism. It's all very tried and true, belched in a confident cold black breath. Guest appearances by members of Carpathian Forest and Orcustus are unnoticeable in all the din, unless it's Nattefrost grunting like Tom G. Warrior in "Hordaland Doedskvad VII." So, if pictures of corpse-painted Norsemen traipsing around a forest or holding an inverted cross make life more meaningful, then *Doedskvad* would sit nicely next to *Trelldom*, *Tsjuder* and *Tulus* in your collection. [<http://taake.cjb.net>]  
— Chris Dick

## Pest In Total Contempt No Colours

Pest is just that. A pest. But a pest can be a good thing, especially in the world of black metal. *In Total Contempt* is a non-stop assault. The guitars incessantly buzz like the wings of a thousand locusts while the vocals constantly gnaw like rat teeth at your eardrums. You will not hear keyboards on this release nor will you hear clean singing or soft breakdowns. Pest is hate and aggression without compromise.

"Thrones Ablaze" starts the disc off at a rather frantic pace and things rarely calm down. The band summon the best of Darkthrone, like a melding of *Transylvanian Hunger* and *Total Death*, while the indirect influence of Celtic Frost shines through only at its slower moments. It's barely evident within the music that Pest hails from Sweden. The guitars display slightly more melody in their hate than their Norwegian counterparts, but for all intents and purposes, the band sounds like raw early '90s Norwegian black metal à la Zyklon B.

Sometimes it amazes me that music like this can still move me as much as it does. I've heard hundreds of records like *In Total Contempt* and yet, when well done, stripped down pure hate-fueled black metal still makes my hair stand on end. That's why I follow Impaled Nazarene, even today, and that's why Pest impresses me so much as well. I suppose it's because I am a sucker for a good catchy simplistic song. Much of this music is nothing more than sped up, overly distorted punk or pop hooks and melodies. I guess you could say Pest is The Ramones modernized, and I fucking adore The Ramones. [[www.pest666.cjb.net](http://www.pest666.cjb.net)] — JWW

## Månegarm Vredens Tid Displeased



I'm not too sure if Viking metal died a ceremonial death with Thyrfing's *Vansinnesvisor* or was unwittingly resurrected on Enslaved's *Isa*, but Månegarm's fifth album proves that no matter what style of metal is fashionable, the stalwart Swedes will always be true to form. So, depending on which side of Niflheim you're on, *Vredens Tid* (*Age Of Wrath*) is either a 50-minute Viking metal triumph or a gimmicky soundtrack to a Scandinavian-themed Muppet Show. Interestingly enough, I find myself planted firmly in the middle, as Månegarm display alarming maturity in songcraft ("Sigrblot" and "Vredens Tid"), unrelenting intensity ("Frekastein") and the smarts for incorporating a real fiddle player ("Dödens Strand") into the fray; Moonsorrow, Finntroll and to a lesser extent Einherjer also share a similar ability to cut a proverbial Nordic rug. As expected, musings of Norse mythology brings the black metal-ization of traditional folk music, and these melodies, incorporated to authenticate the style, often contrast with the vicious intent Månegarm conveys. Outside of that, *Vredens Tid* sounds a tad tired, as if ideas formed back on 1998's *Nordstjärnans Tidsålder* don't quite fit the frame of maturity elsewhere on the album. In addition, the second half of *Vredens Tid* loses steam in part due to the sheer amount of acoustic/vocal pieces — starting at "Preludium" — that weigh it down. "Skymningsresa," "Kolöga Trolltand," "Dödens Strand" and "Hemfärd" are feisty numbers, but not inspired enough to break out of the standard Viking metal mold; Månegarm are preaching to the choir, and after five full-lengths there should be more varied ideas coming out of the songwriters. With a robust production, courtesy of Studio Underground (Draconian, Carnal Forge), *Vredens Tid* is a full feast for those that can't get enough of Asmegin, Battlelore, Falkenbach etc., but not quite enough for those into Enslaved, early Borknagar and Thyrfing.

[[www.manegarm.com](http://www.manegarm.com)] — Chris Dick