

**BLACK COBRA**  
**Chronomega**  
 (Southern Lord  
 / At A Lost  
 Recordings)

*Chronomega* starts out with «Negative Reversal», a track that does a decent enough job in introducing the band, before finding more solid ground with «Machine». The song has a slight METALLICA appeal to it, and would fit in suitably with a battle charge. With the exception of some interesting moments, including the potential montage theme of «Chronosphere», *Chronomega* is made up of tracks that feel like they build up to nothing. BLACK COBRA takes us nowhere we haven't been before. (NL)



**COUNT RAVEN**  
**Mammons War**  
 (I Hate Records)

I remember my first experience with Sweden's COUNT RAVEN on legendary Peaceville compilation *Doom Passages*, thrilled by the Ozzy-

with-balls vocals and blistering solo work of founder Dan Fondelius. Sure, it was a good bit derivative, but when the music hits this hard, the lyrics so passionate, it's hard not to enjoy. After 4 albums under the Hellhound imprint, the band either "took a hiatus" or imploded, reforming in 1999, only to enter exile again in 2006. Fondelius is back with 2 new cohorts, head above water with *Mammons War*. For those expecting a massive shift, say to folk metal or UGBM, it just ain't happening, though a few surprises

pop up near the end. "The Poltergeist" takes a page from relative newcomers SHEAVY and ORANGE GOBLIN in the rougher sound, but keeps an ear to the past, as does anything with the COUNT RAVEN moniker. No uber-technical rhythms here, but then Iommi was never thought of as the Segovia of his time either. It was all about the riffs, and remains so through "The Entity", some tasty Wino-like solo work swirling around epic "A Lifetime", "To Kill A Child" is sadness and ache defined, and

"Seven Days" is followed by "Increasing Deserts", finishing out the album with trumpet and strings played by Danne Norman. In all, if you liked COUNT RAVEN before, you'll be glad to see them back, like an old friend gone too long. If you're new to the band, this is far from a bad place to start. (LR)

**COMMON ENEMY**  
**Living The Dream?**  
 (Overdose On Records)

I'll admit to having a soft spot when it comes to the punk bands of the mid-'80s, as that was when the seed was planted that eventually took root and blossomed into the paragon of journalistic excellence you see before you today. It was all good back then; some asphalt, boards, cheap beer, a boombox and what you had was a party. Thus, when I feel a tad nostalgic I want a band that brings back those feelings of scrapes, scars, skateboards and slasher flicks. Pennsylvania's COMMON ENEMY wants to be that band so hard their constant erections are induced not by Viagra, but by the ridiculous amounts of energy, adrenaline, and desire to fuck shit up



royal that growing up listening to those bands gives you. Granted, originality isn't a main concern - if you've heard one COMMON ENEMY song, you've likely heard 'em all -, but the sheer unbridled enthusiasm of the quartet explodes like a beef bomb in a vegan squat, giving a stiff middle finger to weak-ass mainstream shite. «Beer Bong» and «Hey Kid, Wake Up!» have the patented start-stop thing going ala D.I. and MDC, but «Pac-Man Fever» and «Shut Your Mouth» race forward in a

more GBH / EXPILOITED sense, giving me «those feelings» still, even at 37. COMMON ENEMY has a lot of room to grow in order to stand out from the slough of other punk bands. They're on their way though, and lock your fuel cap, because as they sing in «Syphon & Destroy», «Your fuckin'

**CONVERGE**  
**Axe To Fall**  
 (Epitaph)

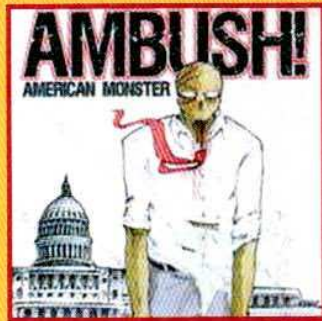
gas is ours!» (LR)  
 One of the most talked-about releases of this year was CONVERGE's "Axe To Fall". Music freaks everywhere were fiending for a copy of this bad boy for



length after reissuing their self-released "Showstopper" EP on Hotfoot Records. It was after working with other labels that the guys from Lafayette, Louisiana found themselves aligned with Pektus and his new operation.

"Jeremy approached us in the summer of '08," Vetter said. "Him and his partners Jay and Gene came out to see us at a local bar and we all just vibed very well and were excited to work together. Numerous phone conversations with Jeremy that didn't involve talks of money and contracts...just the simple fact that he liked what we were doing and wanted to work with us. We are preparing for our full-length now which Hotfoot is putting a lot of work into. We're stoked."

CHANGE TODAY is another



band that found a home with Hotfoot Records. It was after working with other labels that the guys from Lafayette, Louisiana found themselves aligned with Pektus and his new operation.

"We recorded a three-song demo with Brian Hoods of 456 Recordings and decided to shop it around to some labels," drummer Tyler Guidry said. "Hotfoot was one of the labels interested in working with us. After talking with Jeremy, we realized that we were both completely on the same page with how we felt the music industry worked and what was a good approach to getting our music out to people. With Hotfoot being more as a part of the band rather than being a shadow behind the band, we are able to



communicate daily and both share the same goals and views."

CHANGE TODAY is featured on the newly released Hotfoot Records 2009 Summer Sampler compilation and Guidry looks forward to the band's future with the label, which includes their first full-length release some time in the beginning of 2010. "Hotfoot has definitely helped out a lot with promoting the band in more ways than we feel we could not have done ourselves," he said. "Featuring us on a summer sampler album, getting us onto websites...Hotfoot Pressing takes care of all our merch and printing needs. Hotfoot isn't a label that is going to throw money at you and tell you to hit the road and see what happens. It's



more about being teamed together with a group of people and bands that all want to make changes and work with you to accomplish what you feel is right and where you need to be."

This year also saw the releases of *Ambitions* by HEAL THESE WOUNDS from Albany, New York and *The World at Our Feet* from Chicago's THROUGH THE FIRE. As the label continues to grow so does the roster and the ambitions of its founder who started the journey only four years ago.

"Everything just continues to go full speed," Pektus said. "We continue to push our bands and our label to get to what we feel is the 'next level.' We will continue to make this label a household name or die trying."