

ARTILLERY

My Blood CD



ARTILLERY were on the frontlines of the thrash movement in Europe during the early

1980's, yet never really garnered the mass following as some of their comrades. This had nothing at all to do with the quality of their music, but more with poor marketing and inner band turmoil. Classic albums like *Terror Squad* and *Fear of Tomorrow* shall forever be cherished pieces in my personal collection, as will more current releases like 2009's *When Death Comes*. Let's face it, there really is no reason why any self-respecting thrasher shouldn't have a soft spot for these guys. The Stützer brothers are as tight and technical a guitar duo as Glenn and KK or Jeff and Kerry (If I have to tell you who those guys are, you should move up to the mountains and not bother anybody, because you're an idiot), and it really comes through on *My Blood*. Pulling double duty again, both as producer and lead vocalist, Søren Adamsen belts out another stellar performance throughout, even if some of the lyrics this time around are a tad on the hoaky side. Everything else is ARTILLERY as you have come to expect. There are the super shredding riffs of the axe wielding siblings, that will have you nursing a bangover well before the disc stops spinning. There's the pinpoint precision of a seasoned rhythm section, and the gamut of vocal tones brought out by Adamsen that really make this an impressive and enjoyable release. If you are a thrash purist, you already know about these guys. If not, I highly recommend them to you. ARTILLERY may not have the big name and the high profile, but they have more than enough credentials in the chops department. Now, this isn't the best thing the band has done, but it is solid and probably better than most of the so-called thrash records to come out this year. Horns Up, Beers Down! (Bubbs) (Metal Mind Productions)

AUGURY

Concealed CD



AUGURY is a Canadian based technical death metal band from Montreal, Quebec.

When you think Canadian death metal you tend to think QUO VADIS, KATAKLYSM and CRYPTOPSY. AUGURY is certainly worthy of that list. AUGURY formed in late 2001 and instantly blew up in the Canadian underground metal scene. With the re-release of *Concealed*, originally released in 2004, by Galy Records, AUGURY shows the listener why they are worthy of any listener attention at all. *Concealed* breaks boundaries. Just take a track like, "The Lair of Purity," for example. This angelic song featuring clean

vocals and wondrous bombastically gorgeous operatic melody conjoins two very opposing metal genres, prog and death metal, virtuosically. This complex album composition is perfect for making any musician feel doubtful in their playing abilities, and yet also inspire them to improve them. AUGURY'S, *Concealed* is definitely a music venture worthy of exploration and enjoyable to listen to as well. (JJFH)

(Sonic Unyon Metal)

AUTOPSY

Macabre Eternal CD



AUTOPSY is likely to be a band that will immediately pop up when you search for,

"Old school death metal." The band was formed as a result of drummer/vocalist Chris Reifert's departure from the legendary death/prog metal band DEATH in 1987. In its carnal stages, the group specialized in a form of death metal that is extremely down-tempo, sludgy and lyrically brutal. As we saw records like, *Severed Survival*, *Mental Funeral* etc., this assertion could be reconciled as valid. After several years of hiatus, AUTOPSY now unleash their latest full-length, *Macabre Eternal*. Although this album maintains the same oldschool style that we would expect from the band, AUTOPSY have managed to "change the game" in many regards. Firstly, this album has killed production. Listeners can certainly agree that the production quality of 80's and 90's metal records can be, although classic, hard to listen to. *Macabre Eternal* has a garage jam-like feeling to it, while still rolling with a new school mix. This allows the album to translate well and lock the listener in, rather than turn them away. (JJFH) (Peaceville)

BALFOR

Barbaric Blood CD



Ukrainian outfit BALFOR have been around for quite some time, but have

waited until now to unleash a proper collection of blackened thrash metal that encompasses all things evil entitled *Barbaric Blood*. While this quartet's slightly symphonic blend of black metal fury is doing very little in the way of breaking new ground in the extreme metal genre, the consistent surge of aggression and vitriol they commandeer on this nine-track excursion abides by the more melodic template set by the likes of SATYRICON and DIMMU BORGIR with a demonic diligence going over every blast beat and guttural growl. (Mike SOS) (www.pulverisedrecords.net)

BETRAYAL

Abandonment CD

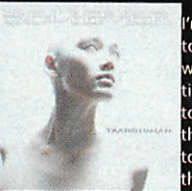


After several set backs, it appears San Fernando Valley, California's new

hardcore heroes are set to release this vicious slab of FIRST BLOOD / LIONHEART -infused hardcore. It's hard to believe that it's been almost three since the release of *The Peoples Fallacy*, but even then the band showed a maturity far and above several others in the same genre. With *Abandonment*, the band take their particular brand of anger and crushing breakdowns to new levels. The albums lyrics seem to have a cohesive theme of being alone, except for some of the shittiest people around and fighting to rise against it. Not a new theme at all, but its never been portrayed in such a heavy, violent and dark manner. The first thing you notice about the album is the urgency and disgust in the overall tone. It's savage, creature-ripping, and tearing its way through pounds of dead flesh. Too nasty? Good. That's exactly what this record is: nasty. It's a non-stop assault of thick guitars, smashing drums, thundering bass and vocals filled with bile. You can almost feel the hatred. I'd love to pick out an outstanding track, but the only things that come to mind are the old school hardcore gang vocals on "The Good Die Young" and the surprisingly mature instrumental track, simply titled "Interlude". Don't misread that as there's nothing on this record worth listening to! From start to finish, this is as perfect of a record as you can get. The grooves within remind me at times of an angrier THE GHOST INSIDE, which I believe Jonathan Vigil contributes to the title track as well. The bands sledges forth and continues to destroy any peace and solitude you had planned, but then again if you listen to this you know what your in for. The band seems to employ a decidedly more mature song writing ability as well, partially due to the fact they spent time on the road with such heavy weights as THE GHOST INSIDE, REIGN SUPREME, STRAY FROM THE PATH, BURY YOUR DEAD and SUICIDE SILENCE. "You cant live if you nothing to die for/ You cant live if you have nothing live for" - "Worth It All". Beyond mature. The underlying theme here is to never give up. Beyond badass. This is beyond anything...get this record! Get ready to be pumped. Get ready to 2 step. Get ready to thump your chest. Be ready for *Abandonment*. (JH) (Mediaskare Records)

BELIEVER

Transhuman CD



I'm not going to spend a whole lot of time getting too deep into this. I agreed to review this record,

even though I am still convinced that BELIEVER's last effort, *Gabriel*, was and is one of the biggest stinkers in recent memory. Well, as if I wasn't having a hard time getting the bad taste out of my mouth left from that last one, here comes *Transhuman*. Geez, what a let down from the mighty Metal Blade. BELIEVER are just terrible. There's really no other way to put it. The vocals sound like somebody's grandmother taking a dump over some recycled "Nu-Metal" riffs (see "G.U.T.") and a few half-hearted attempts at thrashing out. The singer tries to go all Pete Murray (ULTRASPAK/LO-PRO), especially on "Multiverse", but has nowhere near the range and capability to sustain such vocal power as Murray, although this may be one of the somewhat enjoyable tracks from this soon to be dollar bin selection. The musicianship is mediocre at best, and by the way, Jonathan Davis called and he wants his lyrics back. Overall, I wouldn't suggest that you waste your time or hard earned clams on this. After all, the pawnshop only gives you like a dollar or two for used CDs anyway. I'm sure the members of BELIEVER are nice enough fellows, but I just don't have the stomach for their music, and I can't tell you anything more than the absolute truth. I still love and respect Metal Blade until death, but every relationship has its faults. (Bubbs) (Metal Blade)

BLACKGUARD

Firefight CD



BLACKGUARD is an extreme power metal band from Canada; Originally hailing from Montreal, Quebec.

BLACKGUARD to date has released three total releases: *So it begins*, *Another Round* (EP), and their last release *Profugus Mortis*. To date BLACKGUARD has followed in the footsteps of bands like CHILDREN OF BODOM, ENSIFERUM, ELVENKING and KALMAH spending most of their time living on the road. Spanning a vast realm of everything from power folk to straight in-your-face punch the floor metal. In BLACKGUARD'S latest effort *Firefight* they demonstrate that even for a "newer" band they can stand on their own two feet. Where to begin? Besides the obvious fact that female drummer supreme, Kim Gosselin can clearly do what boys do; better. The band incorporates an intelligible range of symphonic arrangements followed by riffs that sound like PANTERA with synth, turning a new leaf in metal. In short: BLACKGUARD is going to spread their wings and overwhelm a genre with a *Firefight*. Prepare yourselves it begins now. (JJFH) (Victory)

DEATHSPELL OMEGA

Paracletus CD



With modern day Rapture scares being increasingly prevalent, I decided to play some

fitting theme music from this French black metal album released in late 2010. Upon listening to the first two tracks of the DEATHSPELL OMEGA album *Paracletus*, I immediately came to the understanding that this band is not like any other black metal band in the world. In fact DEATHSPELL OMEGA is a genre all unto their own. Combining elements of jazz and prog into their metaphysical manifesto, this band could draw from wide variety of fan bases outside of the underground black metal community, especially from the experimental music scene. *Paracletus* is the final installment in the French band's trilogy of conflict eternal between men, Satan, and God. Considering the poetics of that statement, one should not be surprised by the flawlessness by which DEATHSPELL composed this album. Each track runs seamlessly into the next, focused and integrated into part of the greater scope of the whole piece presented by the band. While earlier DEATHSPELL albums frequently digressed into extraordinary feats of musicianship that were as complex as they were confusing, the band has narrowed down their blackened fusion on this effort to create stronger songs. It is a brilliant album, and I would certainly recommend it if you're the type who likes to hear every key on the fret board with a solid rawness that could only come in the form of true European black metal. (NCP) (Norma Evangelium Diaboli)

DEMONAZ

March Of The Norse CD



Founding member of IMMORTAL, DEMONAZ has finally given the metal realm his first pro-

solo effort, the nine-track *March Of The Norse*. This long-awaited offering provides fans of the distinct Norwegian metal sound something to clamor over, as Demonaz and company (mainly comprised by Immortal side project I) lay down an epic-minded album chock full of heavy metal bombast and spirited warmongering battle cries ("Sons of the Sword") complete with pronounced mid-tempo gallops that stay the same within much of the disc, yielding an unquestionable amount of strength that tends to wear down a bit thin towards the end. Nonetheless, the grandiose scope and harsh vocal delivery with choral accompaniment combination ("Legends of Fire and Ice", "All Blackened Sky") fits while a NWOBHM twist hovers over the bleak atmosphere to present

RECORD REVIEWS

REVIEWERS

JJFH- John Haag, Bubbs- Bubbs Harris, JH- Jon Hole, JBM- John B Moore, NG- Nick Garrett, Mike SOS, NCP- Nick Pendergast, K. Simms- Kelley Simms, BB- Branden Blacker, NS- Nicholas Senior, NL- Nathaniel Lay

Label Spotlight

SEASON OF MIST

BENIGHTED

Asylum Cave CD



BENIGHTED are a French based brutal death metal band from Saint-Étienne, France. They

got their start back in '98 when members Julien, Olivier, Liem, Chart and Fred came together and to make death metal that drew its influences from bands such as CANNIBAL CORPSE and MARDUK. Over the years, the band has had line-up changes that now result in the band's current line-up featuring 3 of 5 original members. With that said, **BENIGHTED** now bring us *Asylum Cave*. This album is any extreme metal fans daily bread. Featuring guest vocals by none other than Svencho (ABORTED) and the legendary Mike Majewski (DEVOURMENT). We are nailed to a cross and then beaten to bloody pulps. This album contains various flavors from grindcore, black metal and melodic death metal leaving metal head palettes adequately satiated. **BENIGHTED** demonstrate their superior composition skills as the album transcends normal brutal death metal in songs such as "Asylum Cave" and "Lethal Necrycism," which leave the listener uncontrollably amazed, as the songs go from brutal to melodic and textured metal seamlessly. All in all this album grinds, disfigures and plants a new seed in death metal while simultaneously intriguing listeners in two opposite directions; this is rarely seen to date. (JJFH) (Season Of Mist)

MORBID ANGEL

Illud Divinum Insanus CD



True death metal fans, the time has come to restore the former glory that has been

smearred by the throngs of charlatans with giant stretchy earlobes and gold foil t-shirts. For far too long we have waited for the kings to return to the throne, and now the reckoning is upon us. **MORBID ANGEL** is, or better fuckin' had be, one of the first names that come to mind when thinking about quality death metal. Forget about all of that crap that floods the scene now; I'm talking about the real shit. On *Illud Divinum Insanus*, the mighty **MORBID ANGEL** come full force with a crushing album, full of everything we love about the burliest of metal genres. Instead of relying solely on blast beats and how many different guttural vocals they can pull off, and definitely not resorting to the ultra cheesy hardcore breakdown, **MORBID ANGEL** take you back to a time when this stuff was first being conjured up in muggy Florida garages, with no limit to how extreme metal could be. There are moments of extreme face rippage, but that isn't so gnarly as the deep grooves that **MORBID ANGEL** are known for, and that make up the true backbone of this music. Although it has been over a decade since these guys have released a record, there is no sign of rust. Trey Azagthoth gives a sludgy guitar lesson here, showing how ten years can't slow him down, while Mr. Vincent returns to form

delivering a roaring performance like a sandblaster, peeling the skin back from your skull. In short, *Illud Divinum Insanus* is just the booster shot that the death metal scene has needed. **MORBID ANGEL** are the purveyors, the creators, the heroes, the Gods! If you have been filling out the time with bands like **SIX FEET UNDER**, **DEICIDE** and **ARES**, waiting for the wrecking machine from Tampa to grace our ears again, then you are surely in for a treat. I strongly recommend this to everyone, especially the younger fans of extreme metal. This is how it all came to be. (Bubbs)

(Season of Mist)

OF LEGENDS

Stranded CD



To start this review off by calling **OF LEGENDS** a 'side project' or a 'super group' would seriously

hinder them. When you put a label like that on a project, you automatically start comparing it to the members' previous bands and 9 times out of 10, it doesn't hold up. Not so with this band. True, it features members and former members from **THE SECRET HANDSHAKE**, **SKY EATS AIRPLANE**, **PERIPHERY** and **DROP DEAD GORGEOUS**, but do not start comparing. Just know these guys put out some great music. The album has ten tracks filled to the brim with enough metal testosterone to please metal fans, enough pissed off lyrical content to appease the lyric readers, and enough breakdowns to keep the kids dancing. The music reminds of one of my favorite, now disbanded, nu-core style metal bands from the early 2000 s, **DEVILINSIDE**. A perfect

mixture of metal, hardcore and the everlasting nu-metal downtuning of the late 90s, a la **SLIPKNOT**. Tracks like "Save The Humans" make you feel like your in a post apocalyptic zombie war and make you wanna dance their faces off! Luis Dubuc's vocals have enough urgency and energy to make you feel like he's screaming as if his life depends on you listening to his every word. Travis Orbin's precise drum snaps keep you moving and waiting for more. And the riffs and solos leave you air guitaring. Not because of its extreme dexterity, but because its groove laden. This music truly moves you. It's no wonder Ben Weinman (guitarist and founder of **THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN**) and Tim Smith (manager of **ATREYU**, **NORMA JEAN**, **HORSE THE BAND**), co-manage these guys. In this band's short existence (namely their tour with **NORMA JEAN**, **STICK TO YOUR GUNS** and **IMPENDING DOOM** on the *Explosions II 2011* tour), they played 36 dates. They managed to win over crowds with their metal, mental energy. Side Project? Super Group? Yes, but no. This group has made themselves a band. A band you need to know. (JH) (Season Of Mist)

SEPTICFLESH

The Great Mass CD



For fans of **SEPTICFLESH**, forget everything you have known them for previously. In the past someone searching

for dark ambient, industrial – death metal would have found solace in **SEPTICFLESH**. *The Great Mass*, **SEPTICFLESH**'S latest cd, features elements of those subgenres previously named and then some.

This record plays with brutality, beauty and grace. Mixing elements of **DIMMU BORGIR**, **CRADLE OF FILTH**, **BEHEMOTH**, **SAMAEL** and **CELTIC FROST**, the listener can expect no more than utter auditory, non-serviam chaos with gothic beauty and purity. Acting as an antithesis to "Revolution DNA" the bands critically acclaimed 1999 release through usage of brutal riffs, blistering double-bass drumming and evil guttural vocals, **SEPTICFLESH** seek to challenge the role of God and the framework of the world as we know it through the auditory mass, *The Great Mass*. Recorded with the Filmharmonic Orchestra of Prague and renowned producer Peter Tägtgren (**HYPOCRISY**, **PAIN**, **BLOODBATH**), this album guarantees that sudden brutality is imminent, and the apocalypse of the universe will sway to conducting of *The Great Mass*. (JJFH)

(Season of Mist)

HAILS AND HORNS DOT COM

missile salvo of "Doctor Teeth," shows that **AGATG** know how to bring the quiet before the storm without getting boring. Ditto for "West Cliffs," a piano and drums instrumental that comes before "Hemlock Like This." Taken together, the two tracks sound like **THE DRESDEN DOLLS** opening up for **JOB FOR A COWBOY**; a seemingly unlikely pairing, but **ARSONISTS GET ALL THE GIRLS** make it work. "Tempest," the thirteenth and final song on *Motherland*, is both the longest track and everything that's great about this band: crazy progressive time changes, just the right amount of keyboard weirdness, sick breakdown sections, virtuosic musicianship, and screaming that makes you wonder how the hell they can keep up that kind of intensity at live shows without going mute from throat damage. Synth-metal can sometimes be a hard sell, but **ARSONISTS GET ALL THE GIRLS** get it right. Most definitely a band to watch out for. (NG) (Century Media Records)

ALESTORM

Back Through Time CD



Avast Ye! Don't just stand there?!? Grab an oar, Damn You! **ALESTORM** are a pirate

metal band from Perth, Scotland. This band took the genre by storm with their debut release *Captain Morgan's Revenge* in 2008. From the start, we have seen nothing but pure excellence. **ALESTORM** are back with their heaviest release to date entitled, *Back Through Time*. Heading straight

for the jugular, this album has the epic drinking tunes that we expect, "Rum" and "The Sunk'n Norwegian." Infused with the thrashy elements we would gain from **SWASHBUCKLE**. Most notably, this album is very sing songy. If, "Nancy the Tavern Wench" wasn't enough to satisfy your epic metal gullets desire for drink and song, than this album certainly will. Finally, *Back Through Time* will have you in high spirits as you travel back through time with **ALESTORM** to fight the Viking foe, as they earn their rightful place on the walls of every drunken tavern worldwide. (JJFH) (Napalm)

ARSONISTS GET ALL THE GIRLS

Motherland CD



Take the chaotic precision of **CONVERGE**, the all-or-nothing/no-melodic-BS death growl

of **THE BLACK DAHLIA MURDER** and **DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN**, add a helping of **THE LOCUST**'S sci-fi keyboards, set the oven to "Burnt To A Black F-ing Crisp", cook for 40 minutes (or until the oven sets the house on fire) and you have **ARSONISTS GET ALL THE GIRLS**'

Motherland. While **AGATG**'S outer-spacey synth keyboards may not be for all metal heads, in it's own way *Motherland* is a tough-as-nails techno-metal masterpiece that both defies and expands the genre into new territory. This album pummels the shit out of you but gives you just enough breathing room to catch your breath and realize how tight these guys really are. There are parts of the album like the third track, "Gooseknuckle," where the synth could have been dialed down in the mix a few notches, but that would have defeated exactly that which separates them from other bands of their ilk. "It Was A Memoir," a minute-and-a-half jazz-metal instrumental right before the all-out nuclear