

TRADEMARK OF QUALITY

THE REV. KEITH A. GORDON STUMBLES MINDLESSLY THROUGH THE SORDID FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE TO FIND SUBJECTS TO WRITE ABOUT THAT POSSESS THE ELUSIVE "TRADEMARK OF QUALITY." MP3 FILES ARE POSTED HERE STRICTLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC CRITICISM AND THEREFORE FALL UNDER THE "FAIR USE" GUIDELINES OF U.S. COPYRIGHT LAW.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2007

Roadrunner Classix Revisited: Xentrix

Xentrix "Dark Enemy"
Xentrix "Ghostbusters"
Xentrix "No Compromise"

Back in February, I wrote about **MVD Audio**, the CD end of the Music Video Distributors

empire, coming to an agreement with Roadrunner Records to reissue nearly two dozen of the label's classic '80s metal titles in grand new limited editions on gold discs with original cover art, liner notes, lyrics and everything – hell, you can read all about it over at our sister blog, **Ryan Adams Sucks**. Having received a number of these groovy reissue discs from the good folks at MVD, and after listening to them repeatedly over the past couple of months (between my stories on teevee and, well, that job thing), now it's time to write a few words about these mutts.

UK thrashmasters **Xentrix** (pronounced "Zen Tricks" for you Hooked On Phonics™ types), unremarkably, began life as a garden-variety Metallica cover band known about town as Sweet Vengeance. That they chose to channel Metallic is not surprising, really – British bands struggled during the late-80s to define their own particular brand of thrash-and-speed-metal chops and many of 'em sounded like Lars and crew. By the time of the band's signing with the fledgling Roadrunner label in 1988, based on the strength of their four-song demo tape, the band had changed its name to Xentrix and had already begun to develop its own voice.

Released in 1989, **Shattered Existence** is one raucous mother of a debut disc. The band kicks the amps up to "11" before declaring "No Compromise," and then they kept the damn tape rolling long past the point where their collective ears began to bleed. "Dark Enemy" offers up a literal human sacrifice in the form of guitarist Kristian Havard's hands – surely he lost them after performing the song's caustic fretboard runs, while "Bad Blood" expanded the band's musical palette, displaying melodic elements alongside machine-gun drumming, courtesy of the bombastic Dennis Gasser. Vocalist/guitarist and band founder Chris Astley is a capable frontman, his vox sounding like the



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We are not above writing about a number of other subjects on TMQ, from books, comics and toys to DVDs, electronic gadgets, computer equipment and musical gear. If you have some item that you'd like the Reverend to write about, contact TMQ at the email address below. You can also write us to remove a link if you feel that we've infringed upon your "intellectual property." Hey, we're all just trying to get along here. While you're online, why don't you click the link and visit the Reverend's **That Devil Music Storefront** and maybe buy something, eh?

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same shade of gray as James Hetfield's, snapping and growling like a rabid pup above the razor-sharp mix. The rest of ***Shattered Existence*** mines similar thrash/speed-metal turf, alternating between Iommi-inspired heavy riffing and lightning-fast, virtually blinding lead runs.

This MVD reissue of ***Shattered Existence*** tacks on three songs from the band's ill-fated (but energetic) 1990 ***Ghostbusters*** EP. The three-song vinyl was released as a stopgap to satisfy new Xentrix's fans until the release of the ***For Whose Advantage?*** album later that year. The band's inspired cover of Ray Parker Jr's movie theme song was met with threats of a legal smackdown, however, and the label was forced to recall the EP from the stores. The episode set Xentrix back a bit, but they regrouped and released three more albums for Roadrunner with Astley at the helm, sadly experiencing diminishing returns with each one, proving that they had pretty much spent their creative allowance on ***Shattered Existence***.

Met with commercial indifference in a fluctuating market that had begun to favor grunge bands and vacuous pop, Xentrix dropped its founding frontman and released one last album, 1996's ***Scourge***, with a new singer and guitarist before disappearing off the heavy metal map. ***Shattered Existence*** remains as a classic example of '80s-era thrash-metal, however, a solid collection of songs with performances that transcended the musician's combined skills. With old-school thrashers like Testament and Exodus still kicking the ball around and digging up new fans from beneath the blood-soaked sod of the music industry, Xentrix deserves another day in the sun....

*(Click on the CD cover to buy ***Shattered Existence*** from Amazon.com)*

Labels: [heavy metal](#), [Roadrunner Records](#), [thrash](#), [Xentrix](#)

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ABOUT ME



REV. KEITH A.
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A music journalist
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experience walking the pop culture beat, the Reverend is the editor of the popular [Alt.Culture.Guide™](#) music webzine and book series. As a freelance writer, the self-proclaimed "Reverend of Rock & Roll" has had his words appear in over 100 regional, national and international publications. Gordon has also written extensively on subjects like the media, computers, technology and the Internet as well as music. A public speaker, book designer and samurai webmaster, the Reverend will do whatever is necessary to indoctrinate you with his vile propaganda.

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