



Lucem Fero Album Reviews

Mind Reflections by Pestilence



01. Out of the Body
02. Twisted Truth
03. The Process of Suffocation
04. Parricide
05. Mind Reflections
06. Dehydrated
07. Land of Tears
08. Hatred Within
09. The Secrecies of Horror
10. Subordinate to the Domination
11. Dehydrated (live)
12. Chemotherapy (live)
13. Presence of the Dead (live)
14. Testimony (live)
15. Chronic Infection (live)
16. Out of the Body (live)
17. Mind Reflections (video)

Release date : November 2006

Reviewed by Mark Fisher



Those who particularly admire late eighties / early nineties Thrash Metal should certainly be fan with the legendary Pestilence. Between 1988 to 1993, four studio albums were issued. Incorporating influences which range from Jazz fusion to Thrash Metal, Pestilence never embraced their roots with confusion. In addition, the group continually challenged Thrash's limits.

Grouping during mid 1986, Dutch act Pestilence began as a Thrash Metal concern. In all, the



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inaugural lineup boasted the following musicians; Patrick Mameli occupying vocals, bass and guitar, Randy Meinhard handling guitar, and Marco Foddis stepping behind the drumkit. Initial demo *Dysentery* arrived in 1987, whereas sophomore demo *The Penance* (1987) announced the arrival of Martin Van Drunen (who took over vocal duties, and eventually bass as well). Inking a record contract with Roadracer Records (later rebranded Roadrunner Records), inaugural full length *Malleus Maleficarum* was issued in September 1988 with production from Kalle Trapp. Guitarist Randy Meinhard left shortly after, and pursued other musical avenues (most notably Sacrosanct). Theriac guitarist Patrick Uterwijk joined full time within Meinhard's position. Opting towards Death Metal leanings, sophomore album *Consuming Impulse* came in December 1989 (with Harris Johansson spearheading production). Van Drunen left the group before a third album could be cut, and used Theo Loomans as the bassist and vocalist of Asphyx.

Cynic's Tony Choy was recruited as bassist, whereas Mameli supplied vocals once again. Committed to tape at Morrisound Recording in Tampa, Florida with the legendary Scott Burns, the full length *Testimony of the Ancients* saw release during September 1991. Never a permanent member, Choy was replaced by Jeroen Paul Thesseling. Increasingly enamoured with Jazz fusion, Pestilence conducted a search to discover a producer unfamiliar with Metal music. That person was Steve Fontana, who produced May 1993's *Spheres* alongside Mameli. Roadrunner Records disliked the effort, and subsequent touring faced difficulties. Tensions within the group rose, and so Pestilence split due to the fact that they felt a "creative climax" had been reached. Never officially released in Europe, debut album *Malleus Maleficarum* was reissued in 1998 via Displeased Records. As bonus material, both *Dysentery* and *The Penance* also featured. August 2006's *Chronicles of the Scourge* collected two live shows, namely a performance at the Kix Festival in Veghel, Holland on June 24th 1989, and in Bochum, Germany on November 18th 1988. Issued by Metal War Productions, it included bonus track "Consuming Impulse", and the first thousand copies purchased by mailorder came with the bonus disc *The Consuming Rehearsals*.

Back in 1994, Roadrunner Records issued retrospective compilation *Mind Reflections*. Posthumously collecting Pestilence's greatest songs, Polish label Metal Mind Productions digitally remastered the full length using twenty-four bit technology. Released as a digipack during November 2006, this edition is both hand numbered and limited to two thousand copies. Also, the music video for title song "Mind Reflections" comprises bonus content. Equipped with the benefit of hindsight, this compilation disc attracts interest. Numerous reasons can be deemed accountable for this, with one simply being the audible sonics. During their lifetime, the group achieved little recognition save for that afforded by the diehard Metal community. Hindsight generally wise an individual though, and Pestilence's material was undoubtedly much ahead of its time. The blistering solos featured upon "Twisted Truth" and "Process of Suffocation" warm the heart, as does the explosive solo which inaugurates prime cut "Parricide". In all, one reflects upon those bygone days. Pestilence's influence can be easily traced in compositions authored by mainstream modern Metal groups, such as In Flames and Children of Bodom. Tightly fusing crushing Thrash and Death Metal ingredients to their very limits, the pounding "Hatred Within" maintains an accessible nuance. In its maiden airing, the song was difficult to locate. Prior to its inclusion amongst *Mind Reflections* track listing, the number originally appeared on the little known 1987 compilation *Teutonic Invasion, Part II*, of which sales were modest.

In addition, six live cuts feature. Laid down at June 7th 1992's legendary Dynamo Open Air festival, the performance occurred a year prior to the group's final studio album. Jack Dodd happened to contribute bass in this instance, figuring as part of the European leg of the *Testimony of the Ancients* tour. Overtly raw with dirty overtones, "Chemotherapy" and "Testimony" apply a fresh element to Pestilence's musical stylings. The other four cuts lifted from that very concert are the following; "Dehydrated", "Presence of the Dead", "Chronic Infection", and "Out of the Body". Collectively these six concluding tracks form an eternal testament to the group's magnificent live dynamism, and comprise the only official live recordings ever issued by Pestilence until 2006.

In spite of the material generally utilizing raw brutality teamed against seething vocals, Pestilence's vocals maintained an underlying accessibility - perhaps this was Pestilence's most striking feature.

Great songwriters lurked within Pestilence's ranks, a statement which applies to few Metal groups. Please fail to misunderstand this review, especially in light of the fact that not all of the group's studio full lengths were great. In actual fact, several can be deemed marginally adequate. Having said that, *Mind Reflections* is a confirmed and genuine delight. To date, the compilation is the influential group's magnum opus. The longtime demands of an ever burgeoning fanbase prompted Pestilence's reunion, so their greatest material may yet to be penned.