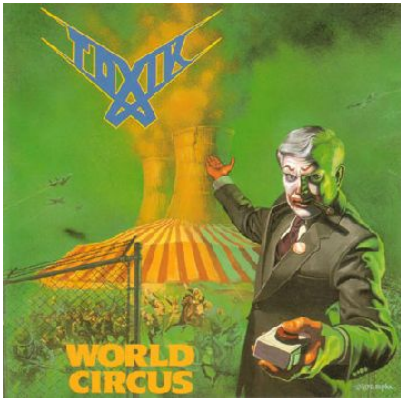


## TOXIK

*World Circus & Think This* (reissues)

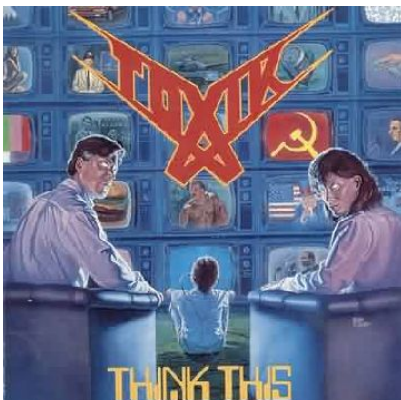
### [Metal Mind](#)



Toxik's debut *World Circus* is a mixed bag. Technical speed/thrash metal is what these guys are all about. Some of the riffage and guitar sounds are akin to what Agent Steel was doing on *Unstoppable Force*. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that *World Circus* and *Unstoppable Force* were both recorded around the same time by Tom Morris at Morrisound Studios in Tampa! In addition to the Agent Steel comparison, it is also apparent that Toxik is from the northeastern U.S., since in a few parts I can hear some Anthrax and Nuclear Assault. For example, "Social Overload" sounds like a cousin to the

Anthrax classic "Lone Justice."

Production-wise, *World Circus* is top notch for a 1987 metal release by any label, indie or major. It really helps show how much these guys just kill on the speedy riffs and rhythm change-ups. But, like I said first, it's a mixed bag. My chief gripe is about the air raid siren vocals of singer Mike Sanders. Just because the guy can hit higher highs than Rob Halford doesn't mean that he always deliver the appropriate melody to compliment the music. Sometimes Mike delivers a good melody, but in a good number of places it sounds like there's some random Geoff Tate vocal track mixed on top of another band's song - I could never get into Confessor for the same reason. At some point the histrionics become a distraction, and this is coming to you from one of the bigger Agent Steel fans you'll probably ever meet. Nevertheless, overall *World Circus* is a solid album...just be forewarned about the OTT vocals. Bonus tracks here are a demo tune (with original singer Mike which ended up re-recorded for the second album) and a brief radio interview.



1989's follow-up, *Think This*, recorded again by Tom Morris and offering similar sonics, is way more diverse. New vocalist Charles Sabin seems to exercise a bit more self restraint than his predecessor, and for the most part his melodies are more tuneful and a better match for what's going on with the rest of the band. He also employs far wider vocal range variation - dipping down into "normal" range a lot, that is; not going to higher highs - so

when he bangs out a high note it's really to more dramatic effect.

With *Think This*, the band also decided to hit the gas pedal less frequently, so we hear some of the other things they can do. The complexity is still dizzying, with some blinding leads and time changes; but among other interesting things there is actually a non-cheesy ballad in "There Stood The Fence," which took me pleasantly by surprise. Another surprise is a faithful rendition of Led Zeppelin's "Out On The Tiles." Clocking in at 53 minutes or so without the addition of the two bonus tracks (rough mixes of "Shotgun Logic" and "Black & White," without vocals or guitar solos), it is a significant amount of music to digest. *Think This* is, ultimately, quite a bit more enjoyable than the debut.

Given the demand for these vintage Roadrunner titles, Metal Mind could easily have cheated out and slapped together a second-rate, bare bones campaign for a quick buck and gotten away with it. Instead, no effort was spared to give the fans the definitive presentation of all of the licensed titles: liner notes for each by drummer Tad Leger, band bio, full-color expanded booklets, individually numbered digipak cases (full color inside and out) with a handsome flood coat of dull varnish, and bonus tracks. These were also remastered, but I don't have an original pressing of either title to tell you what, if anything, has been improved by it. All in all, for the limited production run (2000 of each title) and fair price, Metal Mind earns top marks for going to such lengths to deliver a worthwhile product.

B- (*World Circus*)

B+ (*Think This*)      -Mark Fields