

the genres nowadays, it is easy to forget. Of course, Priest and Maiden still hold the banner high, but today's bands seldom venture down this road. On *United*, we get a high-caliber, present-day album that's loaded with music that sounds just like the long-revered past. Anthems are all over this CD, and fists will rise as high as the voices of listeners when they sing along. It's traditional-style guitars and drums with tasty hooks, not to mention the melodies—the combo makes for one solid listen.



The music of Sweden's Steel Attack, like the fine cutlery its country is known for, is of the utmost precision and sharpness and...well, it is killer. The band's fifth release, *Diabolic Symphony*, may be best described as a stabbing of power metal with an injection of progressive elements, like its predecessors. Look in the dictionary and look up the definition of "heavy metal singer," and you'll see an illustration of Ronny Hemlin, Steel Attack's amazing vocalist. "The Other Side" closes out this album perfectly, with percussive, rhythmic effects from drummer Tony Elfving and bassist Anden Andersson. This is a band worthy of its name.



Translated to "The Banished Children Of Eve," the side project of Summoning's Richard Lederer brings you a world of sullen melancholy and heartfelt despair. Deeply rooted in classical epic, it showcases the beautiful voice of Christina Kroustali all across the release. It's not upbeat or fast, in any sense, but it's almost hauntingly romantic at times—while leaving the listener with a slight sense of sadness. The gothic scene would take well to this unique dark wave group and fans of operatic voices will love this overall intelligent and passionate release. Approach this with an open mind.



If there is one album by the Helsinki Vampires that is a must-have, this is the one. The CD is a fine-tuned version their brand of gothic

hard rock 'n' roll. It's almost perfection—they grow just a little darker musically and also blend some harder veins of metal into the music. Stellar tunes like the anthem "Brandon Lee" and "The Chair" become instant favorites while "Gothic Girl" firmly cements their place in the cold, dark hearts of vixen vampires everywhere. Originally released in 2000, but reissued with the help of Cleopatra Records, it's the perfect time to jump on board.



I will try to be a gentleman about this...the Pony Express may have dropped Piebald's new album off to the wrong address, and most definitely to the wrong reviewer. *Accidental Gentlemen*, is "punk light" with vocals that only a deaf mute could like. Are the four horsemen of the Piebald accidents, or is it just their music (on this record) that is the anomaly here? What does the title mean, exactly? This is *Metal Edge*, not some wanker publication, for Pete Steele's sake. So take this wreck of a record, get on your horsies and gallop over to the Warped Tour.



Ghost Machine might be the only band that has an interactive Ouija board on its website. *Hypersensitive* is the second release from this ghoulish group of musicians, and it comes at you with a fresh and groovy industrial sound. The opening song, "The End" is scary as hell and could invoke the spirit of Captain Howdy, himself. You can hear Alvin the Chipmunk say, "Save yourself...pull the trigger. Do it." The innovative mix of guitar, drums and electronics along with dark and warped subject matter will appeal to those who like NIN and Ministry, and those who like horror movies. Ghost Machine also has a song on the *Saw III* soundtrack.



Unsure of what "future fusion metal" sounds like? Then you look no further than Mnemic. The band returns from years

of touring with *Passenger*—a brutal slab of industrial twisted metal that shines with the talents of new vocalist Guillaume Bideau. The heaviness and technical display seems to offer homage to the might of Meshuggah, yet they don't lose any of their own individuality. The release and power on the album's grooves should enable Mnemic to claw its way out of the underground scene and lead new legions of metal acolytes into the future of the genre.



The masks were gone, and the sun had set on former singer Midnight with the arrival of Wade Black. Yet despite the changes, Crimson Glory remained a supremely powerful melodic metal force. *Astronomica* was a great release that showed the band was not merely an image but instead are also musically proficient. The remaster includes a bonus CD of rarities (live & demo) with expanded liner notes. A must for those who were fans of the genre while it was still new and boundless. With reunion material pending, this is a great starting point for those who've only heard about their legend from others who lived through those early years.



Cosmic Ballroom is a four-piece band of dirty dogs from Sweden pushing their latest release, *Your Drug Of Choice*. While normally not advocating any drug, I think it might take something mood-altering just to get your head right to hear this music. After hearing the atrocious "Barely Legal," (which is the first track) I almost started drinking codeine cough syrup just to get through the record. It's basically raspy bar band slop-rock with annoying vocals. The songs cover topics like sexual immorality and alcoholism, which are intriguing and very rock and roll, but the music isn't very dope...just say no.



The great thing about this compilation is that it includes members of the whole