

Dark Funeral
The Secrets Of
The Black Arts
Vobiscum Satanus
Diabolis Interium
Regain



2007 is the undisputed year of the reissue! It's not a terrible thing — although labels have barfed and re-barfed catalog titles since the idea dawned on them — as it may give out-of-print titles a new lease on life, but the reissue is a double-edged sword. Regain reissued the first four Marduk records to jeers, and will inexplicably do so again sometime in 2008, while countrymen and labelmates Dark Funeral took a completely different route to the reissue concept (well, almost). Instead of remastering and altering album art, Dark

Funeral actually had the balls to provide both versions (Unisound and Abyss Studios) of the *The Secrets Of The Black Arts* on one two-CD set. Long story short, Dark Funeral wasn't pleased with the Unisound production and opted to hire maestro Peter Tägtgren instead, even though they signed their name in the Unisound studio registry in blood (no kidding). The difference between the two is track length, mix and sonic warmth: The Unisound recording is only eight tracks and features a similar production to Dissection's *Storm Of The Light's Bane* and Marduk's *Opus Nocturne*, while the Abyss version features "When Angels Forever Die," a Von cover and a much more sterile production in line with The Abyss' *Summon The Beast* and Setherial's *Nard*. The differences in production quality, playing style and overall atmosphere is noticeable. For example, on the Abyss recording Dark Funeral is slightly faster, but the drum and bass sound on the Unisound recording is, in my opinion, *better*. If you don't have *The Secrets Of The Black Past* bootleg, then there are historical and sonic reasons to own Regain's repress of the album. Liner notes would've sweetened the deal, but alas you're left with standard lyrics and production credits.

Hilariously self-proclaimed as the best "Christ-raping music ever recorded," Dark Funeral's second album *Vobiscum Satanus* eschewed some of its predecessor's dark melancholy for sheer speed. The remaster, like the original, is a full-on devilish blur, with only "The Black Winged Horde" relinquishing some of its light-speed for a forlorn passage or two. The four live tracks (all from *Vobiscum Satanus*) from 1998's Hultsfreds festival sound killer, and work to cement Dark Funeral's legacy as a legitimate black metal live act. The Swedes are, in fact, better live than on record. Whether additional live tracks are enough to get corpse-painted and replica axe-wielding Dark Funeral fans to repurchase *Vobiscum Satanus* is another issue altogether. Though 10 years on, *Vobiscum Satanus* still has plenty of venom left in it, even if, track-to-track, it's a bit too uniform.

Diabolis Interium, this time around, is simply remastered and tacks on the *Teach Children To Worship Satan* covers EP, but it's by far Dark Funeral's best work. Stronger, more varied songs ("Goddess Of Sodomy" and "Thus I Have Spoken," for instance) and a superb production (Tägtgren learned a lot in the many years between releases) showcased a band — known for its revolving door of members — at the top of its game. The original, I think, sounds less throttled than *Diabolis Interium* MMVII, so the Regain reissue is strictly recommended for completists and kids tired of slacker black metal (Xasthur, Furze, Horna, Dodsferd etc.) masquerading as the real deal. Even though Dark Funeral is as obvious as plague buboes, at least it doesn't sound like fifth graders plugging into practice amps in a futile attempt to replicate "Aske."

Though the Dark Funeral remasters lack liner notes, demos (I guess they didn't record one), or other seemingly requisite reissue materials, the long and short of these three albums is that both *The Secrets Of The Black Arts* and *Diabolis Interium* are well worth investigating. *Vobiscum Satanus*, however, is easily had at press time from Amazon for \$4.25 + postage. [www.darkfuneral.se] — Chris Dick

Sadist
Crust
Displeased



I listened to *Crust* drunk. I listened to *Crust* high. I listened to *Crust* stone cold fucking sober and the only conclusion I've come to is that no matter how devoid of talent your band is, somewhere there's a label

willing to reissue your past albums. The problem is, in the case of Sadist's 1997 release, that the subpar mix and nu-metal bounce of much of *Crust* go only to show how far behind the times Italy's self-proclaimed "technical death metal masters" were, even then.

From the sloppy basswork and Kornisms of "Perversion Lust Orgasm" and laughable "with bites your stomach I chop" lyric in faux-black pissfest "The Path," I knew I was in for a wild ride. The best thing I could do is just strap in, close my eyes and hope this rollercoaster of pointlessness would end mercifully quickly. Turns out, the only semi-bright spots on this album were the two keyboard-driven instrumentals ("Holy..." and "...Crust") and only because I'm a sucker for computer/video game music of the '80s and '90s. I could've been playing *Myst* for all I knew or cared, if only I hadn't had to sit through the banality of the rest of *Crust*. With the lyrical content of the album dominated by BDSM shtick, Sadist are either the most horny bastards in all of Italy, or these words were written between Sex Ed. classes in Junior High, the members betting over who'd be the first to "lose it," à la *American Pie*. I could go song by song here, but all you really need to know is that, unless a half-assed Shagrath fronting Korn during the *Life Is Peachy*-era is your thing, Sadist might as well have called this album *Clunk*. At least the name would've been more accurate. Oh, and this reissue includes ridiculous abortions of A-Ha's "Take On Me" and "Relax" by Frankie Goes To Hollywood, both good songs in their own right. Listen to those instead.

From here, Sadist went ass over teakettle into mall-core with *Lego*. 'Nuff said. I wouldn't waste your money on this one. [www.sadistribe.com]

— Lord Randall

Bulldozer
The Day Of Wrath
The Final Separation
IX
Neurodeliri
Metal Mind



Italy isn't exactly a breeding ground for heavy metal and while a few bands have certainly broken through at times, few ever kicked the amount of ass Bulldozer did. Spawned from the inevitable effects of years of intense Motörhead/Tank/Venom worship, the band crippled the world with their take-no-prisoners, buck-all-trends brand of metal. Raw, loud and relentlessly vicious, it's a shame that, until now, the band never really had a proper CD release. Two box sets both failed to get it right (*The Years of Wrath 1983 – 1990* and *Regenerated In The Grave*), and most Bulldozer fans were stuck with their now hard-to-find vinyl LPs. The kind folks at Metal Mind however have change all that.

The band's four full-lengths are now available in digipak format, all sound fantastic and include bonus tracks in the form of the "Fallen Angel" single, a reunion of sorts in 2004 and the horrible last Bulldozer recording that really signaled the end of the band and could have been left off these otherwise immense releases.

Still, all four records are worth owning. *The Day Of Wrath* spits early Venom sounds while *The Final Separation* takes those sounds to spookier territories and visits fellow Italians Death SS' doom 'n' gloom stylings; *IX*, arguably among their best moments as a band, saw Bulldozer with a new drummer and fueled on speed metal, while farewell record *Neurodeliri* kept it fast and incorporated haunting keyboards. Lyrics are included and you'll love reading the broken English rants and pains from the pen of perversion. A great cult band that lived it to the fullest and are proud of what they achieved. Grab these quick as they're limited to 2000 copies.

[www.geocities.com/neurodeliri] — King Fowley

Obliveon
Nemesis
Carnivore
Motormouth
ProDisk



Not every American thrash band in the '80s and early '90s failed because of genre overexposure. Some folded due to the fact that they were simply not as talented, energetic or unique as some of their luckier/more talented peers. Does Faith Or Fear or Forced Entry ring a bell?

Think of Obliveon as Canada's own beloved version of these bands. Not as talented or charmingly OTT as Voivod, Razor or Sacrifice, Obliveon preferred a more mid-tempo, technical thrash attack akin to the burgeoning tech-death movement. Indeed, while *Nemesis* still harbors much of Obliveon's initial oldschool thrash sound, latter efforts like *Carnivore Motormouth* curiously echo the strains of bands such as Death, Atheist, Pestilence and Believer.

Unfortunately, Obliveon couldn't keep a song together as well as their peers, and much of this material suffers from "too much" syndrome. Too much stop/start, too much monotone and too much of too little ultimately makes the band a bunch of dull boys. Of the two, *Nemesis* is the clear winner here, but still, your hard earned cash is much better spent on Voivod's *War And Pain* reissue. [www.myspace.com/obliveonmusic]

— MetalGeorge Pacheco

Quick Change
Circus Of
Death
Metal Mind



Originally released in 1989 by Roadrunner Records, 2007's re-release treatment of Quick Change's 12-track *Circus Of Death* couldn't have come at a better time. Just look around and you'd be hard pressed not to see the discernible thrash metal resurgence within the metal genre, as bands like Municipal Waste lovingly wave the thrash banner by rediscovering and recreating those feelgood '80s vibes and classic acts like Exodus, Overkill and Testament continue to crank out new music and live performances across the globe. This Illinois thrash metal quintet, despite their tireless hustle to get into every 'zine and on every radio show around the globe, musically fails to register anywhere near any of the aforementioned and sounds just as you'd expect, which in the eyes of the puritanical thrasher just may be enough of a good thing. The S.O.D.-style riff of "Sludge," the Anthrax-meets-Flotsam And Jetsam structured "Injected" and the Dark/Death Angel-esque vocals on the cheesy "Battle Your Fear" are serviceable but too homespun to be classified as classic. Still, they do exude a mirth and whimsy that a sizable portion of the thrash contingent often employed, fondly displayed on the Mercyful Fate riff-driven "Leave It To The Beaver" amongst others. Unless you're a thrash completist, *Circus Of Death* is an album that you've heard before, and thanks to the current popularity upswing, will probably hear again and again ad noseum in the very near future. [www.quickchange!.com] — Mike SOS