

AUDIO DROME

DEADLY DANGEROUS DECENT DULL DRIVEL DOA DEAD ON ARRIVAL

REVIEWS BY JESSICA BUCK, ALEX DELLER, AARON VON LUPTON, SEAN PLUMMER, GRANT SKELTON, JEFF SZPIRGAS, GLENN TILSON



H.P. LOVECRAFT / ANDREW LEMAN / FABIO FRIZZI

The Festival
CADABRA RECORDS

It's still Christmastime as this issue of *Rue Morgue* is being put together, which is why you're reading a review for H.P. Lovecraft's *The Festival* on vinyl – arguably the darkest Yuletide tale ever written, one that begins with the innocence of freshly fallen snow and ends in predictably damp, monstrous madness (and a copy of the *Necronomicon*). Narrator Andrew Lemman lends the story's nameless protagonist sufficient emotional depth, optimistic and hopeful at the start before becoming ambivalent and ultimately anguished, which ties in nicely with the score by Italian horror maestro Fabio Frizzi. Here, the composer offers one of his most beautifully powerful yet subtle scores, pulling out all the stops including synth, piano, strings, and eventually a full orchestra, starting out in the Christmas spirit before growing oh-so-dark, until all of the instruments combine into something downright terrifying. This 2021 reissue is a double-LP that includes the isolated score, and is a must-have for horror soundtrack aficionados.



AUTHOR & PUNISHER

Krüller
RELAPSE RECORDS
No one's going to mistake *Krüller* for *Thriller*, but Author & Punisher mastermind Tristan Shone's decision to

switch off some of the aggro on album number nine could boost his cultural signal even further than his 2018 *Beastland* single "Nihil Strength" did. Don't get us wrong: *Krüller* is a punishing listen that showcases Shone's mastery over electronic tonalities and battle-ready beats, but his bespoke blending of industrial and metal (performed on machines he designs himself) is tempered with mournful vocals reminiscent of The Deftones' Chino Moreno. Album opener "Drone Carrying Dread" is representative of the new(ish) sound: an apocalyptic cry of despair with an epic scale that makes it a stadium rock anthem for an impossible audience of hipsters and rivetheads. Shone's fatally downtempo cover of Portishead's "Glory Box" will rightfully spark interest, but the depth of his rage is best demonstrated on the titular closing track, which sounds like Pink Floyd processed through a bad DMT trip.



NEPHTHISIS

Spiral Hollow
DARK IRIS MUSIC

Dark times spawn dark art, and Nephthisis' *Spiral Hollow* offers proof that these times are dark indeed. Bound to cause endless arguments about proper pronunciation, the band's namesake – and musical delivery – is a tribute to twin goddesses Nephthys and Isis from Egyptian mythology. A musician for film and television by trade, multi-disciplinary artist Sheila Eden's creations are naturally visual. Starting with the cautiously restrained "Remnants of You," the angst reaches a full boil in standout track "Sovereign Cry," before bubbling over into the industrial dance number "Lies Beneath." Playing with rock and industrial instrumentation, breathy whispers, howls, and soaring sopra-

nos, *Spiral Hollow* rests somewhere between Portishead's haunting minimalism and Chelsea Wolfe's witchy charm. Perfect for those looking for an elder goth version of Evanescence.

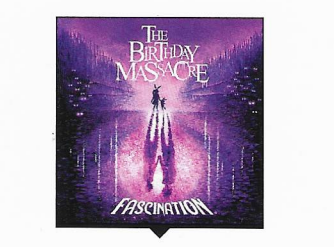


OBSIDIAN

Vultures
(INDEPENDENT)

"Love in a cemetery is a grave affair," states the gatefold insert on this 10-inch EP from South Florida's Obsidian: a good indication of the devoted '80s goth rock contained within. Obsidian's influences are like a who's-who of Batcave club bands: The Cure, Christian Death, Sisters of Mercy, etc., and although there's an obvious newbie-element to this EP (the band is trying a little too hard to replicate a past era with more limited musicianship), there's something captivating about the mountainous basslines on "Viracocha," the slithering guitar on "Anachronous Life," and the deli-

cious synth of "Night Director." Even if you've heard this all before – and perhaps, better – there is something about revisiting music for the children of the night produced with the sounds of modern day.



THE BIRTHDAY MASSACRE

Fascination
METROPOLIS RECORDS

The candy-coated melancholia that The Birthday Massacre has perfected over the course of its career has shifted on *Fascination*. Instead of a longing for lost youth, the Toronto-based sextet's ninth album focuses lyrically on the inevitability of death, with equal measures of fear and acceptance. What remains the same is TBM's trademark sound, and fans of their unique meld of epic electronics, haunted melodies, and goth rock embellishments will find much to sip and savour. The title track opens the album with glittering keyboards and



LADY IN WHITE

Frank LaLoggia
SCARE FLAIR RECORDS

For the 1988 cult flick *Lady in White*, Frank LaLoggia poses a unique triple-threat as writer, director and composer, and his complete score has finally been pressed on ghost white vinyl. LaLoggia's melodies mesh well with actor Lukas Haas' child protagonist, and while the music plays to the horror beats when necessary, the emphasis is on a nostalgic sweetness and sense of adventure. The score is at its best when it employs a wordless children's choir that adds to the timeless flavour of the music, ultimately pitched somewhere between Dave Grusin's spritely themes from *The Goonies* and Danny Elfman's ethereal *Edward Scissorhands*. If this initial release from Scare Flair is any indication, the new label is an act worth watching – the two LP set is effectively presented in four suites, with evocative art from Brad Mrock.