



Decibel

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Roadrunner Finally Caught (*Up With*)

With 20 or so classic Roadrunner records seeing the light of day once more, how can you tell them apart?



Last year, Roadrunner Records celebrated its 25th anniversary, but in the jumble of messy supergroup collaborations and even bigger concert spectacles, they left the house with a few lights still on and some bands

uncelebrated. Perhaps to give closure, Polish label Metal Mind has re-released several "forgotten" albums in a limited edition, even leaving the original company's mid '90s lawsuit-pending "RoadRacer" logo on the back. Even more importantly, they've given rest to albums by Disincarnate, legendary guitarist James Murphy's ex-Obituary/Death/Cancer project, avant-death metallists **1 Gorguts** (*Considered Dead* and *The Erosion of Sanity*), Texan doomsters **2 Solitude Aeternus'** debut, *Into the Depths of Sorrow*, eco-friendly deathsters Sadus, and the "best-of" **3 Pestilence** album, *Mind Reflections*. With demo cuts, videos, and remastered sound (depending on the amount of hearing you have left), these releases give rest to these otherwise abandoned souls.

Perhaps more curious than Roadrunner's ephemeral underground metal are Roadrunner's well-intentioned near-hits. Floridian thrash 'n' rollers Crimson Glory might have competed with Savatage in the late '80s, but their chrome masks (kind of like Quiet Riot at the car wash) are surely worth a second gander. Upstate New York's technical speedheads **4 Toxik** had a helium-voiced singer and chops to boot, and surely tech-metal bands like The End (witting or unwittingly) owe them a debt, although we can't get past the album cover for their debut, *World Circus*. And lest we otherwise forget, Metal Mind has reissued **5 Heathen's** *Victims of Deception*, which features sometime Angel Witch/Exodus guitarist Lee Altus (the band even boasted Exodus frontman Paul Baloff at one point). Other bands getting last gasps include thrashers Atrophy, Heathen, Realm, Xentrix, speedsters Znowwhite, and purveyors of our favorite genre, groove metallers Last Crack. Then again, after all those cartoons, we always knew the Roadrunner would return. —KORY GROW

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work. "His guitar and voice... slows it down... exactly what I needed... roans, bay... or bong gu... spered an... and "The... aty Pythe... Phazm's art four d... tongue in cheek—
—ANTHONY BARTKE

Cherno did one of the most badass nerd-cool things I've ever seen when, in the middle of a genius Pitchblende set, he tripped on the stage of the old 9:30 Club, fell forward flat on his axe and broke it. End of set. The crowd went bananas.) But no, in spite of Chernov's genuinely ripping riffometry, the pieces (howling frontduke vox, distorto-bass that signified indie) can't help but fall into patterns so familiar you wonder when Rye Coalition are gonna pay them a call, lead pipes in hand. Come back, Young Heart Attack; all is forgiven. —JOE GROSS

PHAZM
Antebellum Death 'n' Roll
THE END
Return of the Loving Dead

Reason #1 Phazm had me on their side right away: "Death 'n' Roll" right in the title of their second album. Reason #2: The cover art is a bunch of skeletons fucking in a cemetery. Not Bencsoter-explicit bonin' in the boneyard, they're in silhouette around the border of the cover. It's tasteful skeleton fucking, you know? And it gives you an idea of what Phazm are all about. Like Buck in *Kill Bill* (or the dude from *Eaten Alive* if you wanna be kvlt), Phazm are here to fuck—though they have a little more in common with Rob from *Nekromantik*. Check the lyrics to "So White, So Blue, So Cold" or "My Darkest Desires." When Slayer asked "Do you like... older women?" these French sickos answered with a resounding "OUI!"

So it's called Antebellum Death 'n' Roll, but there's a song titled "Black 'n' Roll" too. Most d'n'r is as much about incorporating (or perverting) rock 'n' roll signifiers into the artwork and lyrics as it is about rocking. Phazm actually jam a rockin' boner into death and black metal's putrefying... wait, is this supposed to be a family magazine? Considering stuff like the harmonica over the intro to "How to Become a God" and the walking riffs in "Black 'n' Roll," you might say they're really jamming it where it doesn't belong, especially since the black/death side of the band is way quirkier and more idiosyncratic than, say, the Crown or Entombed, but they

