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The breadth of Controlled Bleeding's new album "In Blind Embrace" has the scope of a concept album. Whether the band intended it as such, I couldn't tell you. The end effect is what matters. And what matters is that this does not feel overblown or give the sense of being a heady conceit as do many concept albums. What is also important - more important, even - is that it has all the positives of such an endeavor: an expansive vision that incorporates musical diversity within the aspect of the album's ideal. Somber gothic mood pervades the entire album but it makes itself known in a number of ways. There are straight forward goth-industrial patches of electronic beat, moody synths and dramatic vocals. There are also instrumental chunks of symphonic/film score sensibilities. Less industrial but still quite gothic sections offer prolonged periods of intense atmosphere and mood-building. "In Blind Embrace" even borders on experimental at times, but doesn't push its luck in this regard. The attentive listener will find other influences creeping in throughout, as well. This is as dark as anything metal and ensconces the listener in a world that resonates with emotion and angst. Four stars

- Kristofer Upjohn