

lence *Times of Grace*, right? Or to convince Nick Blinko from Rudimentary Peni to come out of hiding and draw the cover art for the one before that. For more proof, check out the *Iron Lung Comedy Hour* tape (grab it from Terminal Escape, Earth's greatest blog), a hilarious collection of non sequitur stage banter: "This one's about big sloppy boobies. No it's not, I'm just kidding." So yeah, obviously, IL guitarist/vocalist Jon Kortland has an industrial noise project—he's probably got the *Eraserhead* soundtrack playing in his brain 24/7. I feel pretty comfortable assuming that.

For *Mass Consumption* is harsh in its overall vibe, but made more palatable by each of its 28 tracks being limited to exactly 44 seconds. Most of the four-letter-titled songs are dominated by overdriven programmed drums and Kortland's shouted vocals (which, unfortunately, can get a bit monotonous), with noisy loops running forwards and backwards. That consistency makes a few of them stand out. "Numb" and "Swim" are ultra-condensed drone. "Copy" melds beats, synth and spoken vocals like recent Prurient. "1970" and "Dirt" are not Stooges covers, but run back-to-back and are great. If you like powerviolence and/or noise and your attention span lasts at least 44 seconds, you'll find something to dig here. —ANTHONY BARTKEWICZ



RIGOR MORTIS
Slaves to the Grave

RIGOR MORTIS
Mike Scaccia's last will and testament

More than anything, *Slaves to the Grave*, Rigor Mortis' first full-length with the original lineup since the Hall of Fame-inducted debut in '88, reinforces just what a tragedy Mike Scaccia's death in late 2012 was. This album is as goddamn good as it is largely because of Scaccia's performance. If these are some of the final recordings he did, then he went out on one hell of a high note.

Slaves to the Grave is the unique reunion album that manages to recapture all the little stylistic touches from the band's salad days without sounding too forced. The songs are largely built around Scaccia's speedy tremolo-picked thrash riffs, while vocalist Bruce Corbitt belts out gore/horror flick tales of terror in his booming tenor. The production is, of course, better than the self-titled debut, and the songs are definitely longer and more complex, with some unexpected twists and turns. Opener "Poltergeist," for instance, goes from prime old-school RM to a calm, psychedelic fade-out, where

Scaccia takes the tune someplace altogether unexpected and solos melodically for the final two minutes.

Though the rest of the band—bassist Casey Orr and drummer Harden Harrison—are no slouches, it's impossible to spin through this album and not think that Mike Scaccia owns it. He brings every song to another level, with either his unique style of riffing or his incredible lead work. It's a shame he's not around to reap the acclaim he deserves. And for fans such as us, it's a bummer we won't get any more Rigor Mortis albums as amazing as this ever again.

—ADEM TEPEDELEN

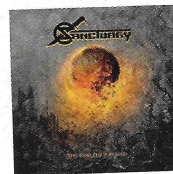


RINGS OF SATURN
Lugal Ki En

UNIQUE LEADER
Tales for a decelerated culture

Rings of Saturn's alleged use of digital means to convey the impression that they play way better than they do in real life would be a problem even if the band hadn't consistently denied said allegations in the face of overwhelming evidence. Why? One of extreme metal's most vibrant charms is its emphasis on real-time physical performance—a trait that naturally situates it more with jazz and classical music than with the dominant, production-dependent forms of our time. The truncated tones and note-perfect quantization on the Dublin, CA-based technical deathcore quartet's third album (as with the two before) land it far enough beyond current acceptable tech fudge levels to significantly devalue the listening experience in terms of both performance and production-oriented modes of appreciation.

Lugal Ki En sounds like machine music, pure and simple, minus the redeemingly intimidating inhumanity of, say, Meshuggah's *Catch Thirty-Three*. Insufficient intimidation also fuels the fires of Lugal Ki En's most tragic aspect: neither the band's purported misrepresentation of their technical prowess nor even their purported misrepresentation of said misrepresentation would count for nearly as much in the kangaroo court of public opinion if not for compelling sonic evidence. Simply put, the album could pass for any or all of the following: 1) a 45 rpm Dickies record played at 78; 2) something that might come out of an evil stepmother's music box if the stepmother were sufficiently evil; 3) random Dethklok parody medleys from a motorized taxidermied-squirrel band on a kidney-shaped wooden pedestal; 4) Ewoks. —ROD SMITH



SANCTUARY
The Year the Sun Died

CENTURY MEDIA
A safe place

There's an obvious asshole question that comes to mind when first listening to the new Sanctuary: Why isn't this a Nevermore album? The obvious asshole answer is "different lineup," of course, but since both outfits share two key voices—including the literal voice, Warrel Dane—it's a fair question.

Quick history lesson: Sanctuary were essentially the predecessor to Nevermore; they released two mostly-ignored-but-excellent albums in the late '80s. The big difference came from guitarist Jeff Loomis, who joined Sanctuary in a touring capacity towards the end of their original run, and then lent Nevermore a real level of musical complexity that Sanctuary lacked. With Loomis doing his own thing, it's back to the more straightforward stuff. "Arise and Purify" feels like a spiritual successor to *Into the Mirror Black*'s "Future Tense," its thrash-based attack satisfying in a way that Nevermore's more virtuosic compositions never were. Dane also goes for the higher notes, and it's surprising how well his voice has weathered years of touring and drug abuse.

Much like this year's *Floor* album had Torche DNA spattered all over it, though, it'd be pretty hard not to let 20+ years of Nevermore inform *The Year the Sun Died*. From the songwriting to the production to the vocal cadences, you could definitely trick someone into thinking they were listening to the latter. This is a slightly different beast that scratches the same itch. You want powerful, progressive thrash metal? You'll find it here, no matter the name on the package.

—JEFF TREPPEL



THRONE OF SACRILEGE/ IMPURIUM

Unleashing a Cacophony of Destruction

ORCHESTRATED MISERY

To hell with moderation

In this split, *Throne of Sacrilege and Impurium* cook up three tracks each and duke it out to see whose recipe will curry the most favor on the black-death metal continuum. The result—they wish—is that the listener becomes so disoriented that they lose all grasp of conventional morality, and spend the remainder of their lives avoiding