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**EVILUTION DVD – BRINK/MVD** 70/100

What would be your first reaction when a DVD of a movie called Evilution falls into your lap? Mine, was "oh my, what a cliché name." A perfunctory search on the net yields thousands of returns with many of them being actual titles. Two other, admittedly small, problems are the cover caption notifying the viewer that, "once it's unleashed, it can never be stopped" and the artwork. Giving away the plot so conclusively cannot be too smart, can it? As for the cover artwork, which seems to make this out to be a war movie one wonders again. They do illustrate syringe and strands of DNA at least, which are more indicative of the film.

Two viewings later and Evilution is pretty much an impressive zombie sci-fi flick. It is obvious that the producer and the director were working with a small budget, but not that small, and what they did have is put to great use. In fact, past some of the early jerky camera action, which has become so tired, the film keeps a steady grip on the material, throws in some good action, special effects, a sub-plot or two and just enough romance to keep the thing moving with evil haste. And, oh, minimal humour. So important. Sick of the obligatory humour gobbledygook. Evilution keeps it all serious.

Evilution is a good mash-up of science fiction, the zombie genre and a little tales from the hood and for my money a damn sight better than many other bigger budget films. Uwe Boll was not allowed within 2,500 kilometres of this film's shooting location. – Anna Tergel

**GOTHKILL (DVD) - 2009** 50/100

This so-called horror movie is about Nick Dread, played by New York based artist Flambeau, a catholic priest who is burned at the stake for claiming that some witches are innocent. He subsequently makes a deal with Satan to turn over hundred thousand souls over to Satan in return for future rule over hell. Onward to the present and just when Dread is ready to begin delivering the promised souls things go wrong and he is transformed into the body of a woman. And the rest is history!

What the viewer is dealing with here is a low budget movie with a plot that is perhaps not the strongest. This is reflected in many other aspects of the film, from the acting to the special effects, as well. Gothkill is really only for the curious and also features Eve Blackwater, and Mistress Juliya aka Juliya Chernetsky of Fuse TV (formerly MuchMusicUSA). – Anna Tergel

**V/A - PAGAN FIRE – NUCLEAR BLAST** 40/100

This compilation is clearly catered to a trend as there is no reason to call it Pagan Fire other than someone's imagined grouping of the bands featured in it. Bathory's Song To Hall Of High, from Hammerheart, is a spoken word kind of intro bettered by Sabbat on The Beginning Of The End. Enslaved's Isa sometimes sounds like a cross between Fear Factory and Satyricon. Unleashed's The Longships Are Coming, from Sworn Allegiance, is a kind of Swedish Crowbar and Pro-Pain with typically short lyrics courtesy of Johnny Hedlund. Amon Amarth with Victorious March does what they do best, presenting an effective mix of the heavy and the relatively melodic. Wintersun do a poorly produced version of Children Of Bodom with Winter Madness. Finntroll's Nedgång, from Ur Jordens Djup, is just a mish mash. Equilibrium, while possibly a tad heavier, are like a cross between the previous two with Blut Im Auge. Moonsorrow's Kylän Päässä can just be dismissed, way too much of the non-metal here. The Irish Primordial, sometimes called Celtic or black metal, do Empire Falls from To The Nameless Dead. Eluveitie, on the other hand, call themselves the new wave of folk metal and are an eight piece, enough said there. Korpiklaani need no introduction, Tapporauta from Korven Kuningas is featured here. Ensiferum with the promisingly titled Deathbringer From The Sky present something of a pure German sounding heavy metal mixed with some folk extras. Falkenbach's Laeknishendr is more raw black metal with the unfortunate folk influence, but this could be a lot worse as this is actually mostly catchy and speedy at the same time. Thyrfing with Høst seem to be trying to be heavy but don't try hard enough. Turisas' Battle Metal is too jolly sounding and uses too many extras to be convincingly battle themed. Bal-Sagoth is Shackled To The Trilithon Of Kutulu and is forced to present a Cradle Of Filth inspired mess. - Anna Tergel

**MUMAKIL, OBTUSE, THIRD DEGREE - THE SICK, THE DEAD, THE ROTTEN PT. II (3 WAY SPLIT) – THE SPEW RECORDS** 70/100

This is a second in a series of splits by The Spew Records and starts off with Mumakil from Switzerland whose nine tracks are simply named I to IX. The longest of the nine songs is just over a minute and a half and it is therefore not too difficult to guess the style. Mumakil are grindcore with guttural and screaming vocals and use a fair share of death metal and a few thrashy riffs as well. Fast drumming and all that is required is here and Mumakil deliver. Next up is the Dutch quartet Obtuse and unlike Mumakil the lyrics are included and it is a good thing because after the heavy Recognition Is Contemporary and its social commentary comes Bob Ross with lines like "Bob Ross never tried to force his ways up on us" and "It's so obvious it's boring me" and the band take to poking fun at the now deceased painter

best known for his show on public television in the US. Next is Away with a dose of suicidal lyrics. That Mirryll has an almost gory feel. The Day That Started Wrong is less than a minute long and starts off with "I farted, it's wet and it don't wanna move", not much more to say there. I Thought That R&B Shit Would Be Over By Now starts off with an actual sample of a R&B song but soon jumps into the grind and yet again the lyrics explain it all with the likes of "Started in the local church choir...Your Christian values soon depraved with porn" and "Vocal lines from high to low that would even make Ronny James Dio Growl." Musically, Obtuse are not pure grind as there are instances of the doomy, sludgy and thrashy in the six songs featured here. Third Degree is the third and last band featured here and take a mostly hardcore-ish route with angry and screaming vocals entwined with dark segments in Gorilla Fight, Death To The Villagers, Ether Mary and Values Without Values. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – ANTHROSPHERE VOLUME 1 – ANTHROPIC

Anthropic Records is the new imprint of Evan from The Green Evening Requiem, a band whose demo previously appeared in the hollowed pages of Metallian. That a label would draw first breath by releasing a compilation is risky, but not unusual. The production costs are lower, the publicity potential higher and the label will dip its toes into the market to see what works and what does not. Sadly, music has been cheapened to such an extent that compilations simply do not sell. Whether a big budget sampler or an underground attack like this music compilations are dead in the water. Hence the risky adjective and the bigger surprise that Evan has dubbed this disc Volume 1 portending more. Mal sehen, as the Germans would say.

Most importantly, what about the music? The bands here must have been cherry picked very carefully and one at a time. The styles range from Death metal to black metal and Opeth and progressive, but one thing that does not change is the quality of the bands. Surprisingly, every single song on this disc showcases a band that can have a serious career in front of it. To be precise about the potential on this disc let us agree to refrain from the need to single the acts out. Sil Veth, Lethan, The Green Evening Requiem, Woe, Monolith and Bereavement play to impress. If underground mavens buy one album this or next year then Anthrosphere needs to be it. Hell it is cheaper than the value of any word out of Stephen Harper's mouth, which for the sake of this argument we will value at \$2. It is available through [www.anthropicrecords.com](http://www.anthropicrecords.com). – Ali "The Metallian"

#### V/A – ALL FOR METAL (DVD+CD) – LOCOMOTIVE

The DVD features 24 promo video clips and six bonus live songs. A first look at the track listing and this seems a very poor roster or collection of bands, watching and listening this the assumption is mostly confirmed. Even UDO's opening song, The Wrong Side Of Midnight, is disappointing, at least by his standards. Destruction's The Alliance Of Hellhoundz is a very cool and original video however, and features many guest appearances, and along with Tankard's The Beauty And The Beast is a highlight and one to watch. But it's mostly downhill from there, Masterplan, The Poodles, Elvenking, Magica, Absolute, Doro, Kotipelto, Evidence One, Shakra, Lions Share, Heavenly, Nostradameus, Jorn, Edguy, Debauchery, Eisbrecher, Theatre Of Tragedy, Perzonal War, The Traceelords, Annihilator, and Tarantula all tackle several styles, sometimes non-metal ones. The live portion, where Krokus, Circle II Circle, Silent Force, Ross The Boss, Dionysus and Shaman can be seen with one song each does not fare much better.

The accompanying CD features 18 songs that are much the same as the DVD in that there isn't too much here. Made Of Hate open with Bullet In Your Head and a decent heavy metal attempt. What follows is mostly either female vocals and keyboard oriented (Axxis), techno-industrial, (X-World/5) or rather ordinary (see list below). At least Headhunter, Dezperadoz and Black Messiah provide some welcome comic relief in Parody Of Life, Rawhide and Moskau respectively.

The interesting songs are Paradox's Infested, Rob Rock's Garden Of Chaos, Helstar's The Kind Is Dead. Other bands heard here are Jon Oliva's Pain, Eden's Curse, At Vance, Crystal Ball, Mekong Delta, President Evil, Almah, Beautiful Sin, and Michelle Darkness. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – METALMANIA 2007 (DVD + CD) – METAL MIND PRODUCTIONS

The latest in the series of Metal Mind DVDs is the recording for the 2007 edition of the Metalmania festival. The very first thing that catches the eye is in the inclusion of Benediction on the 'side stage' CD (perhaps at the expense of Crystal Abyss?) No matter the reasoning for including the band, with at least some recognition, there it must be disturbing to the Brits to be there and not join the presumed bigger names. That is not to say that the 'main stage' and first DVD is all good. Witness the opening act, Korpiklaani. How playing violin and bagpipes and banging heads go there is up to the band and their followers to explain. Three regrettable songs later the aforementioned face-painted Crystal Abyss have been given the honour of one annoying keyboard-laden song. Darzamat follow with two almost equally forgettable performances in Labyrinth Of Anxiety and The Burning Times. Zyklon injects some much-needed life into the proceedings with three of their own. Vital Remains do a bit more too but their stage presence borders on the silly. Entombed is heavy and fast but their image belies the time when they abandoned death metal. Destruction offers nothing new but what they do offer is thrash metal the heavy and traditional way. Blaze Bayley's three songs are in the Manowar, Ozzy and Iron Maiden mould and are somewhat out of place, but not ineffective nonetheless. Sepultura with False, Convicted In Life and Dead Embryonic Cells are full of energy. It is telling that Paradise Lost have only one song featured. Testament close out the first DVD and Chuck Billy, Alex Skolnick and co. do not disappoint. The bonus CD features 11 songs by bands no one has ever heard of, and oh of course Benediction. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – PAGAN FIRE – NUCLEAR BLAST

Pagan Fire, with its depiction of Viking rituals, is Nuclear Blast's sampler of "of the best Folk, Pagan and Viking Metal acts around." Aside from how Bathory which kicks off the CD with Song To Hall Up High (at a guess) is not really around this compilation is probably the label's scheme for introducing some of its own bands among the sub-genres' better-known bands. Groups like Eluvietie and Bal-Sagoth (since dropped) are sandwiched between names like Unleashed, Enslaved and Amon Amarth.

Barely anyone listens to a band for its lyric (unless the act's name is something like Bob Dylan or Joan Baez perhaps) and so the grouping of bands here features a number of diverse styles with the folk category obviously being all ridiculously wimpy crap and the Viking/pagan cadre needing assessment on an individual basis. In general, the opening line-up of the disc featuring the more established bands strikes a metallic chord before a slew of silliness sets in featuring harp, flute, synthesizers, accordion and ghastly shrieks from bands whose name need not be mentioned on a metal web site. The package features a DVD supplement with video from groups like Helheim and Wintersun. Sixty points for the metal bands and included bonus DVD and a fat 'please go get a burial at sea' for all the hoarse drunken yelling by the wimpy bands that not coincidentally also likely have either a bloke playing accordion or carrying a violin!

- Ali "The Metallian"

#### V/A - NUCLEAR BLAST ALLSTARS OUT OF THE DARK - NUCLEAR BLAST

Here is the second instalment in the 20 Years Nuclear Blast vanity series and one is seriously beginning to wonder whether the label has peaked and will survive given the quality of the featured bands. This edition is meant to represent the band's underground or extreme side, but all one gets instead is a bunch of generic and pedestrian offering that hardly even touch the extremeness end of the spectrum. Admittedly, the songs are all composed by former Soilwork man Peter Wichers in his downtime and are not expected to be of a high quality, but still...

Featured current and former Nuclear Blasters are Anders Friden of In Flames, Peter Tägtgren of Hypocrisy, Speed Strid of Soilwork and more. The song Devotion featuring Jari Mäenpää of Wintersun could have been lifted off a Strapping Young Lad album. My Name Is Fate featuring Mark Osegueda of Death Angel sounds like a sleazy hard rock song - apparently, no one noticed - while Closer To The Edge is a mallcore affair not worth a dime. The sole redeeming moment comes ironically courtesy of John Bush, the man who was dropped by Anthrax and consequently is not in the Nuclear Blast camp any longer. Paper Trail is a good song because of Bush's voice.

The rest of the album is generic maxima courtesy of lame teenage pop crooners from joke bands like Scar Symmetry or Sonic Syndicate. This future is bleak. Fans will find a bonus 'best of' CD attached to this at stores. - Ali "The Metallian"

#### V/A - NUCLEAR BLAST ALLSTARS INTO THE LIGHT - NUCLEAR BLAST

Subtitled 20 Years Nuclear Blast this CD serves to celebrate the successful label's twentieth anniversary via a number of new songs written and arranged by Rage personnel Victor Smolski and Peavey Wagner. In turn, Nuclear Blast has recruited some of its most successful artists to individually guest on individual tracks and add their voice to the celebration. Notable guests include current and former Nuclear Blast-ites like Marcel Schmier of Destruction and former Nightwisher Tarja Turunen to staples like Tobias Sammet and Hansi Kürsch and Marco Hietala. The ten tracks included strike a pedestrian pose and the fact that NB makes the point this album features the label's 'lighter' side is of little consolation. This is the issue here. Rarely ever before, have so many artists gathered in the metal and produced such an inoffensive and safe music. If this is the state of metal, we should all ready for another takeover by punk or rap because middle-of-the-road is primed for being run over. The production has as much to answer for here as the middling songs.

On another front, one cannot help but get a feeling of me-tooism for this compilation. Could anyone not wonder whether Nuclear Blast was inspired by the release of the Roadrunner United CD and concert two years ago? Both projects reek of vanity, but one would at least hope for something wilder and relatively exciting as opposed to an ersatz effort. This double-disc features songs from Nuclear Blast bands like Threshold, Helloween and Hammerfall on disc number two. - Ali "The Metallian"

#### V/A - THE HEAVY METAL BOX - RHINO

OK, admittedly there is nothing special here for a metal girl who owns it all because this "A 12-track sampler" of the four-disc/70-song compilation of hard rock and heavy metal songs of the last four decades features tuneage I already own and bang my head to. After all, some of the most gorgeous longhaired stars of metal have been in bands like Queensrÿche, Iron Maiden, Whitesnake and Megadeth. Why this compilation is so good is the sheer number of bands and songs included with the obvious like Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Slayer, the surprising Michael Schenker Group, Rose Tattoo and Tygers Of Pan Tang as well as the ridiculous like Living Colour and Spinal Tap making it onto the box set.

Like I said, any metal fan worth his long mane already owns every single one of the songs on these discs, but for the new, newer or newish or those you want to introduce to metal this is a very good compilation. I can't get over how good Klaus Meine's voice has been or how someone decided to include Blue Cheer on the sampler. - Sheila Wes Det

#### V/A - REGAIN RECORDS - MUSIC WITH IMPACT (DVD) - REGAIN RECORDS

This compilation is one of all the bands that constitute Regain Records and actually contains several note-worthy and classic bands that take the viewer back to the early days of the label in the late '90s. Featuring 23 videos including Arch Enemy's Bury Me An Angel and Deranged's Eroti(kill) this DVD spans the earliest all the way to the likes of Marduk's

Throne Of Rats and Necrophobic's Blinded by Light Enlightened By Darkness to name just two of the highlights. Besides the aforementioned the DVD starts with Sahg's Godless Faith, and also includes videos by Dimension Zero, Embraced, Defleshed, Bronx Casket Co., Samael, Tenebre, Total Javla Morker, Nightmare, Death SS, Dark Funeral, Dismember, Mustasch and Sargatanas Reign and two each by Vader and Behemoth. There are enough good bands and songs here to make this collection worthy viewing. – Anna Tergel

#### **LUCTUS/ARGHARUS – SONITUS CAELI ARDENTIS Split CD – LEDO TAKAS**

I feel like such an ignoramus writing a review on two bands whose names and album title means nothing to me. The groups sharing this disc hail from Lithuania and play evil death metal. Luctus is a one-man project, while Argharus features four individuals. Neither band is directly comparable to the bigger names of the scene as far as sound or style in concerned. While both bands have all the ingredients that are necessary, evil vocals, speedy tempos, rapid rhythm changes and more, the fans will not be pointing at a song or passage as being copied from other groups. Certainly, names like Gorgoroth, early Borknagar or Marduk are relevant, but strictly as a genre.

Like many bands from Eastern Europe Luctus sings of war, nationalism and all that. The band also seems to use drum machines for obvious reasons. Argharus and its lyrics will remain a mystery to me, and anybody else, who has less than a commanding mastery of Lithuanian. Argharus' side ends with a rare bass solo.

Both bands are intense and completely capable. The black metal cult has fresh blood. – Anna Tergel

#### **V/A – GIGANTOUR (2CD) – IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT**

This double CD version accompanying the DVD release of the festival includes two songs not found on the DVD format in Anthrax's Caught In a Mosh and I Am The Law, in addition to songs from Dream Theater, Life Of Agony, Dry Kill Logic, Bobaflex, Megadeth, Fear Factory, Nevermore and Symphony X. The production quality of the songs is good but certainly not the best heard from a live release. Bands like Nevermore stand out in the energy level they provide but mostly one gets the usual interaction with the audience like 'thank you for coming out', 'come on' and so forth. The point where this release fails is in terms of presenting anything more than just a sampling of the bands. If this is meant to promote any of the bands involved it doesn't do enough and if it is meant to provide extra income on the back of the live shows then it hasn't quite captured the live feeling one is entitled to expect from a heavy metal festival. – Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - GIGANTOUR (DVD) – IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT**

Curiously, the CD version of this release features something not available on the DVD version in two Anthrax songs. That rare oddity aside this is not much more than a sampler released in hopes of raising or maintaining the profiles of the bands which, while may still be successful, are not growing in terms of commercial success. Better Than Me and Medicine from Bobaflex, Lost and Paper Tiger from Dry Kill Logic, Inferno (Unleash The Fire) and Of Sins And Shadows from Symphony X and The Day He Died and Love To Let You Down from Life Of Agony are the opening songs and bands of this Gigantour and do not inspire and often sound rather listless in the big arena setting in Montreal. Nevermore do a better job at using the small stage space provided to them and Warrel Dane and co. belt out solid heavy metal with Born and Enemies Of Reality. Transgression and Archetype by Fear Factory, Panic Attack and The Glass Prison by Dream Theater, and She-Wolf, A Tout Le Monde and Kick The Chair by Megadeth, are all featured performing relatively newer songs none of which are ground breaking nor fresh to those familiar with the headliners. At least Anthrax, on the aforementioned CD version, play Caught In A Mosh and I Am The Law. The mandatory bonus DVD features much of the expected in backstage life, pranks and antics plus footage where Dave Mustaine gives us a glimpse into the daily stress of going through the business and security aspects of the tour. – Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - HEAVY KARAOKE - HITS OF IRON MAIDEN (DVD) – KSF**

This is fifteen Iron Maiden songs on a multi track DVD, each audio track features different mixes with different instruments. The songs are played by a cover band called Mauron Maiden as obviously an independent label will always find it difficult to secure the rights of the actual Iron Maiden songs. The tracks included are Run To The Hills, Aces high, Number Of The Beast, The Trooper, Can I Play With Madness, The Evil That Men Do, Fear Of The Dark, Iron Maiden, Hallowed Be Thy Name, Phantom Of The Opera, Wrathchild, Wildest Dreams, Holy Smoke and Wasted years. One made for a niche market but certainly fun for those who are into karaoke. – Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - HEAVY KARAOKE - HITS FROM SPINEFARM RECORDS (DVD) – KSF**

As opposed to most of the other releases on the Heavy Karaoke series this DVD features songs performed by the actual bands. It also features some images of the bands involved, but most are just hand held home video style footage. The listeners can sing, and maybe play, along to three from Nightwish, one each from Sonata Arctica, Ensiferum, Norther, Charon, Twilightning, To/Die/For, Entwine, Kiuas, and The Machete and end the fun with three more from Children Of Bodom, all for a total of 15 chances to make a fool of oneself. – Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - HEAVY KARAOKE – HITS OF PANTERA (DVD) – BANDOKE**

Does the world really need metal karaoke DVDs? It obviously does, since we have one right here. The DVD features 15 songs "in the style of Pantera", which means that they are not played by the original band. Still, the music is very close to the originals, and the singer is actually better than Phil Anselmo ever was – at least technically. The songs include popular tracks like Cemetery Gates, Cowboys From Hell, I'm Broken, Five Minutes Alone, Walk, and Mouth For War.



Users can choose between various different playing modes: "Without vocals" and a) no guitar, b) no bass or c) drums only. The options for "with vocals" are a) no guitar, b) no bass, c) drums and vocals or d) full band version. The DVD operates a bit slowly, and the loading pause before a song starts is too long. During the songs, the screen shows the corresponding part of the song (like intro, verse 1, chorus, etc.), the lyrics with changing colors according to the timing of the vocals, the key of the guitar parts (like D), and the chords (if there are any, like C#5). A rippled line with changing color indicates the speed of the guitar track. This DVD is clearly intended for musicians, and singers can use it right away. Guitarists and bassists are lost without the song transcriptions, though. It is impossible to play a solo by only knowing the key, for example. Many guitarists prefer playing along to a CD by a band to not have visual distractions. But who knows, some people might be interested in this DVD, especially if they play in a Pantera cover band or if they already own some Pantera songbooks. – Andreas Herzog

#### V/A – THE REALM OF NAPALM RECORDS – NAPALM

It really says a lot about Napalm Records if this DVD, plus the included bonus CD, is a true representation of their roster. Judging by this compilation Napalm Records is a repository for all things folk and gothic with the term metal being only loosely attached and even then to a few of their bands. It is somehow interesting that Atrocity's directionless but trendy Cold Black Days starts the proceedings, Battlelore can at least claim to a concept in Storm Of The Blades and Journey To Undying Lands. Besech, Darkwell and Elis seem to prod along in the midst of a trend tide. The thrashy Hurtlocker suddenly stand out, but that is not much of an achievement considering the former bands and the three Korpiklaani videos that follow. Lacrimas Profundere brings variety but only in gothic form. Leaves' Eyes, Sinamore, Tyr and Visions Of Atlantis only serve to confirm the opening two sentences of this review. The live portion of the DVD starts with the second band that definitely does not belong here, Enthroned's Helligium Messiah is raw black metal and is sure to disrupt the monotonous barrage of non-metal around it. Salatio Mortis and Midnatsol add another six live songs. Along with the aforementioned bonus audio CD the DVD contains a bonus Leaves' Eyes special following the band on tour. The other extra belongs to the guys forming Wig Wam and they will make you forget all about the folk and gothic with their brand of, surely intentional, cheesy Poison-like glam. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – AKOMPIATION VOL.2 – AKOM

Italy's Akom Production is back with a new compilation, which like the one before features bands of several different genres like metal, punk, hardcore and even rock. Unlike the predecessor though volume two has gone further afield and brought together several groups from outside Italy. The majority of the disc is comprised of Italian bands however and many of them sing in their native tongue. The bands are not limited to independent bands either. The disc presents songs from several rival labels. The label starts with music for metal fans – the band is called Last Rites – but soon drifts into everything else. G-Zero raps, Serpent tries to be Cradle Of Filth, Runt is just sucky and Effigy (one of 50 Effigys out there that is) sounds like music my college station plays. Overall, the disc is for the more open-minded and adventurous fan and might soon become a collector's item as most of these bands will never be heard (of) again. The label might be looking at signing some of these bands so cast a vote if you have or are getting the disc. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – METALMANIA 2005 – METAL MIND

This DVD and CD double release consists of over four hours of material. The DVD from the big stage of Poland's main metal festival features multiple songs from the likes of Amon Amarth, Dark Funeral, The Haunted, Napalm Death and several other less known and mostly forgettable performances by Dies Irae, Arcturus, Darzamat, ANJ, Pain, Turbo, and Apocalyptica. The big stage and apparent lack of extras is both good and bad as it showcases the bands without distraction but doesn't offer much to look at when some decide to use cellos for example. The CD features some material from the lesser-known names that participated at the festival. One that stands out from that group is Pyorrhoea, who in Suicidal Masturbation, as the title suggests, offer a brutal grinding style that doesn't disappoint. All in all just another showcase of a compilation that only serves to provide more exposure to the festival organizers. – Anna Tergel

#### V/A – HOLLYWOOD HAIRSPRAY VOL.5 – PERRIS

You have to love the Hollywood Hairspray series. Not only is the music water for the parched lips of every single hard rocking glam and sleaze fan but also Perris Records serves notice that the scene is alive and well. A friend recently told me that glam metal makes as much sense as SUVs nowadays. If that's true then who is buying or playing this stuff? This is the place to discover new boys (and girls – who's that on the cover?) with long hair, great dress-up and music that sends shiver up and down the spines. Volume five has a couple of rock cuts, many sleaze numbers and several hard rock tracks. The disappointments are Dirty Rig (featuring Warrior Soul's Kory Clarke), Jack Viper's Merry Go Around and Nice 'N' Sleezy from UK. Chris Laney rocks as usual, Bastardz, The Deadthings and Sweet Cheater provide the listener with three glammed-to-the-max numbers that beg for repeat listen and Brazil's Snow probably takes the cake with a song called Razorblade Kiss!! Wasn't Quiet Riot called Snow once? Come on babbby, try some Hollywood Hairspray. It looks good on you! – Sheila Wes Det

#### LEVIATHAN/SAPTHURAN Split CD – BATTLE KOMMAND

Are we staring at a new trend? It seems that Metallian's been receiving split CDs by two American black metal featuring black and white covers (often re-releases by one-man acts) on a weekly basis for a few months now. The sound is always inspired by Darkthrone, as is the presentation obviously. Having said that the cover has suffered so

much in the printing process as to be almost veiled out of sight.

Of the two bands here Saphthuran has the more conventional sound. The production is also cleaner, yet do not mistake that for mainstream appeal. This stuff is as dark, grim and misanthropic as the day Jehovah created this damnation bowl. Saphthuran offers three tracks, two songs and more than 15 minutes of music. The man's growls and shrieks would have lesser demons scurrying back to hell.

Leviathan, the better known of the two, is less obvious and noisier. This portion of the disc begins with noise, samples, percussion and so much distortion that the story of the world seems lucid in comparison. The man's demonic howls are only topped by his barking and howling on Crushing The Prolapsed Oviducts Of Virtue. Leviathan does slow down every so often for an intro or for atmospheric effect, but the sound is there to hurl damnation not recreate the mind of a ballerina like dimwit bunny or whatever the pop band is called. The fine guitar picking on the aforementioned Crushing The Prolapsed... track is appreciated, as is the same on Saphthuran's And Autumn Sheds Its Final Tear. Shrouded in fogs of mysticism, these bands will rise, surround and choke the listener. - Ali "The Metallian"

#### **V/A - METAL=LIFE - HOPELESS RECORDS**

Metal=Life is a charity compilation featuring two CDs and one DVD in co-operation with The Hot Topic Foundation and Sub City charities for music and arts. Totalling 33 songs and 18 videos on the DVD there is no doubt that this is one extensive compilation. However, this is nowhere near an exclusively metal package and no matter what the title implies bands like Horse The Band, Fight Paris and Giving Chase are anything but metal. As I Lay Dying and Thine Eyes Bleed rescue the CD and DVD, but then again no one should be buying this expecting to be blown away by the bands contained within it. Nevertheless some charities may benefit from this and some fun is there to be had with odd but original videos like Horse The Band's A Million Exploding Stars. - Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - THE LUGBURZ COMPILATION III - LUGUBURZ**

The boys over at Lugburz Towers do a fine job of promoting their national metal scene. It must be tough running a label based on the quantity of bands calling a country the size of a typical Wal-Mart (where finding good taste is as rare as morals in the US government) home, but the game is about quality and not quantity. What must be even more difficult is finding enough black metal bands willing to appear on your compilation in a country the size of Belgium. Well, Lugburz has pulled it off unless one considers the disc dumped in an envelope with a cardboard instead of an actual jacket serving as the packaging for the disc.

Like any other compilation the musical and sound quality of the represented bands vary. The first band on the sampler, the unpronounceable Aguynguerran, has a weak sound, but great music. Others bands might have a weak sound including tinny drums, while others pull it together rather well. A couple of bands from Lugburz's own roster also appear here. What makes this compilation work rather well is the shortage of poser K&F (keyboards & female vocals) bands. Instead, the bands and the label concentrate on the genuine article. Still, a joke/cartoon band called Lemuria caters to the kiddy market. Ignoring that band, the better bands here are the aforementioned Aguynguerran, Iconoclasm and the raging Shores Of Madness, Stormkraai and Histoire Noire whose torturous song Folter would sound a lot better with an actual production. On the flip side - here comes the obligatory kerrap - is Lemuria and a band called Satyrus which makes Def Leppard sound uncompromisingly brutal in comparison.

There is not a better way of familiarizing oneself with the black metal scene over in Belgium than this compilation. - Ali "The Metallian"

#### **V/A - ARMAGEDDON OVER WACKEN (LIVE 2004) - MAGICK RECORDS**

A three-CD set of the 2004 Wacken festival, this compilation showcases a variety of the bands that appeared that year. Featuring a total of 39 bands playing 46 songs one gets a good sampling of how big a festival or concert Wacken really is. From Dio and Anthrax to Hobbs Angel Of Death and Cannibal Corpse many varieties of metal are covered here, although not unexpectedly many of the bands are not metal at all and some are even lesser known in most parts of the world. A band called Dr. Rock and another called Bal Sagoth on the same CD somehow just doesn't make too much sense either but that is the nature of Wacken or any other big show.

Basically a sampling of live material, none of which is terribly too exciting. And someone care to explain the choice of Wacken's Texas Bull logo? - Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - WORLDEATER VS NOT COMMON - WORLDEATER/NOT COMMON**

This 26-song/71-minute long compilation disc arrived at Metallian Towers in the same package as the self-titled The Green Evening Requiem demo. What the connection between the band and the disc/labels might be is not immediately clear, but the myriad of bands on the sampler once again remind us that the downfall of most compilations is how crappy bands overwhelm the worthwhile few. There are many bands on the disc covering styles from alternative to punk to grindcore to doom and heavy metal, but only a couple of the songs are actually worth investing time in. Hellblock 6, Progeny Of Ruin and Raising Kubrick are several of the stimulating bands. In contrast, utter crap like Northern Liberties, Syzslak or Kiss Kiss Kill first need to learn how to play their instruments before we on the critique side of the table can begin to judge their music. Independent DIY music is praiseworthy if and only if the music is good. Starting a garage band and recording before having proper songs or skill is only adding to the acute glut of bands on this planet. - Ali "The Metallian"

#### **V/A - 12 COMMANDMENTS IN METAL - ROADRUNNER**

The 1985 compilation album, 12 Commandments In Metal, compiled by Aardschok's Metal Mike is one of the best ways to grasp how the metal scene sounded like in its best days and simultaneously freshen the ears with some vintage and rare heavy metal. Getting one's hands on this LP might be difficult, but search and you will find.

The sampler kicks off in fine form with Bitches Sin and the song Ain't Life A Bitch. This is rough and ready bash metal with justifiably bitter lyrics. The guitar work is near perfect for the rhythms and solos are wild and capable while the drums keep a steady pace. This is thoroughly metal.

One of the best heavy metal songs ever, and certainly Hellion's best, is up next and it is called Run For Your Life. Ann Boleyn and her California-based band perform their song with hard riffing, throaty vocals, glorious solos and action-packed lyrics. The locomotive drumming hits all the right notes for this urgent song ("my timing was all wrong...") which demands to be played loudly.

Where we had a bitch several minutes earlier we now have Whore by the band Warhead. This particular whore is a standard frolic through the red light district of Venom with infernal screams added as a bonus. The singer belts out his incomprehensible lines while the whipping bruises the listener.

Fever is a red hot song from Tokyo Blade. One of the bands that started off much better than it ended up becoming, the NWOBHMers' song is designed for fans of the movement and comes with superb soloing a la Iron Maiden.

Tyson Dog's T.W.A.T., courtesy of Neat Records, is up next and is basically a frenzied romp of hardcore punk with noisy guitars. This band was dismissed as noisecore early in its career and has unceasing pounding drums. It sounds like these canines had gathered a choir of mice to assist in the recording. Either way, believe it or not, Tyson Dog makes the other bands on this compilation sound well-mannered in comparison.

Japan's Earthshaker was the contemporary of Loudness and sounded close to that band without the services of guitar god Akira Takasaki obviously. The live version of the song More is a classy and powerful presentation of the typical early Japanese metal sound sung in the band's native tongue - magnificent!

Side Two begins with the pentagram of blood holding the jackal's truth and a band which needs no introduction.

Slayer's The Anticrist (sic) appears here in the live (in the studio) format. No explanation is needed regarding this song given how everyone probably owns this song elsewhere which is probably not the case with the other tunes on 12 Commandments.

The, until recently, rare Weapon song Set The Stage Alight follows Slayer and is a testament to the band's capability and talent that stands up well on its own. It might be tame compared to The Antichrist, but this song drips with such NWOBHM class and power that it will simply not be denied. Set The Stage Alight is a fist-pumping and jaw-dropping song with rowdy vocals and attitude to spare. This compilation is worth disinterring just for Weapon if you are an NWOBHM aficionado. Weapon's lack of success is one of the scene's biggest shames. Just listen to the marvelous rhythm section performance.

Compared to the other bands here Anthrax's Soldiers Of Metal is mediocre and all the more hollow sounding knowing that the band went on to reinvent itself alternately as either hardcore or rap. Ross The Boss produced this. Who cares? The oft-copied (including on this LP) Venom is up next. The gods of black metal complete the 'bitch' and 'whore' triumvirate by contributing a Voyeur. Venom, like Slayer, really needs no introduction.

Speaking of black metal, Satan appears next in the guise of a classy and melodic NWOBHM band with a song called Oppression. The song has not aged all these years. The melodic dual guitars, story line and commanding vocals were the recipe for a great band that fell victim to line-up changes and not believing in itself. Satan never repeated the performance it gave on its debut album from which this song is taken.

Omen ends the album with one of its select admirable songs. The masochists contribute Torture Me which is timely. It allows the listener to get a prime example of the US metal sound from the sampler as well. It is a shame that this band reformed recently for how could they match the glory of songs like this?

12 Commandments In Metal is an excellent time-piece of a sampler featuring a couple of unsigned bands and oddly no bands directly signed to Roadrunner. Never mind though, the LP is crammed with one gem after the other. - Ali "The Metallian"

### **V/A - CALIBAN VS. HEAVEN SHALL BURN THE SPLIT PROGRAM II - LIFEFORCE**

Apparently Caliban and Heaven Shall Burn have agreed to make releasing split CDs a mutual tradition for the two shared a disc in 2000. The band have moved on from Liferforce, but that has not stopped them from returning to the German label for another split album. A few things have changed for the bands musically however., They are both less hardcore. It is remarkable how much the Gothenburg has influenced the hardcore and crossover scenes. Both bands show traces of the Swedish sound. Heaven Shall Burn mixes these metal influences with a sound that comes near newer Satyricon. Caliban is relatively more straightforward, yet uses a lot of melody and even harmony. A Summer Dream is a great song. In fact, there are not any songs here that could not be characterized as strong within their own genres. The only problem is the isolated use of clean vocals by Caliban.

There is a problem here though and it lies in the overall value of the disc. Heaven Shall Burn offers up two cover songs on its side, while Caliban has a total of four older songs on offer here. It does not sound like they cared much for this split after all, does it? - Anna Tergel

### **V/A - HOLLYWOOD ROCKS! - DEADLINE/CLEOPATRA**

Hollywood Rocks! is exactly the type of sampler that the world needs so badly right now. The nice folks at Cleopatra Records have spent a lot of time and effort putting together this sampler of four discs and eighty hard rocking, hair teasing, nerve titillating tunes to remind the world what it felt like when men shook their bodies and long manes to the tune of loud music. These bands had the feel, the vibe and the groove and it was all about nothing but a good time.

The discs present both underground songs like Xciter's Sleepless Nites (featuring George Lynch) to tunes by unknown glamsters like Saigon Saloon to the bigger bands like Keel, Jetboy and Quiet Riot. They are all here! What's more these songs are either live, demo or alternate versions that no one has heard in a long long time. Never mind though, the songs thrill like electricity and bring back the glory days. If you like te-RIFF-ic tunes, sweeping vocals and dynamic guitars then it's all here. You and I just got to got to have this box set. - Sheila Wes Det

#### **V/A - ALONE IN THE DARK - NUCLEAR BLAST**

This is a 2-CD compilation of "music from and inspired by the original motion picture" Alone In the Dark. To have 36 songs inspired by a movie released long after some of the songs were written and released is as interesting as having Nuclear Blast releasing a compilation for a movie starring two actors struggling to keep their places in Hollywood by accepting roles in this thriller, in Christian Slater and Tara Reid. Having said that the 36 songs cover a rather broad spectrum, from the non-metal of Samael and Lacuna Coil to the much more bearable Dew-Scented and Suffocation. Along the way one can get a dose of In Flames, Nightwish and Hypocrisy. Most other big names of the scene are included as well, anybody picking up this CD can happily enjoy (or not) Arch Enemy, Cradle Of Filth and Dimmu Borgir, and one must not forget the likes of Dark Tranquility, Soilwork and Shadows Falls. They are all here. - Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - APOCALYPSE, LIVRE 66, CHAPITRE PREMIER - SEASON OF MIST**

Another day, another label releasing a compilation, a double CD in this case, only one of which has been made available for review. The 17-track CD starts off with Penumbra, in the vein The Gathering with some middle-eastern sounding passages. The Dead Old Tree is next and We Cry As One is perhaps a more commercial version of what preceded it. The Crest's Butterflies And Dragons lacks anything remotely heavy metal and belongs to a new wave or gothic compilation. Green Carnation also provides little in the way of metal in Boy In The Attic (radio edit). At least My Insanity make use of electric guitars even if Cosmic Orgasm is reminiscent of Rammstein. Dawn Of Relic provides much needed relief sounding better than it would be if listened to on its own, Masquerade Of Sickness perhaps not too surprisingly reminds one of the likes of Insomnium and other similar Finnish bands. Blood Duster's two tracks are even more welcome at this point, especially the grinding Idi. Mezzerschmitt's industrial sounds afford some variation to the compilation. Skjend Hans Lik is Carpathian Forest's entry showcasing their version of black metal. Macabre give us their brand of Murder Metal in You're Dying To Be With Me. Council Of The Fallen's mix of thrash, black and death metal is probably the highlight on this compilation, Longing For Clarity is a recommended listen. Mayhem's You Must Fall is a mix of blasting drums accompanied by some strange sounding guitar riffs and effects typical of the band. Formed by ex-Voivod member, E-Force is next with the very much Voivod influenced Satanic Rituals. Nattefrost play traditional black metal as the Sluts Of Hell title would suggest. Defiled reminds one of the early '90s blasting sounds of Napalm Death and many others of that era. Macabre Minstrels round off the CD with an acoustic 'morbid campfire song' about convicted killer Tom Dooley who's headed for a hanging. - Anna Tergel

#### **V/A - THE FIRST 20 YEARS - AUBURN RECORDS**

This disc either might be a complimentary compilation or a free promotional album, but that does not detract from the worth of The First 20 Years Auburn Records 1984 - 2004. This label has harboured several underrated bands over the years and the inclusion of these notable Cleveland-area acts makes this CD well worthwhile. Shok Paris (pure molten US metal), Destructor (Anthrax in studs) and Breaker (top-notch hard 'n heavy) kick off the album in fine style. Why none of these bands made it is a cause for bewilderment. Purgatory is also good and, while not as impressive as the first three bands, further shows Auburn's A&R as impressive. The disc starts going downhill beginning with Wretch and on to Manimals, Black Death and others though. To the best of my recollection these bands were not signed and the recording quality resembles that of the demo variety. Even if these were once Auburn bands they clearly don't attain the same levels as Shok Paris or Destructor and are bound to disappoint. The disc ends with Jag Panzer's 1987 song Chain Of Command. If recent reports that Jag Panzer was not allowed to re-release the original albums due to a contractual hindrance by its old guitarist is correct then this compilation is the only place where one can officially hear this song nowadays. Furthermore, this track serves another purpose. On a continuous play mode the next song is Shok Paris' Go Down Fighting which by virtue of being so superior to Jag Panzer shows the injustice in the music world. After all, Jag Panzer is still releasing album, while Shok Paris is merely an underground name from years gone by. - Ali "The Metallian"

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