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## YOUR NEW FAVORITE BAND

### The Strays

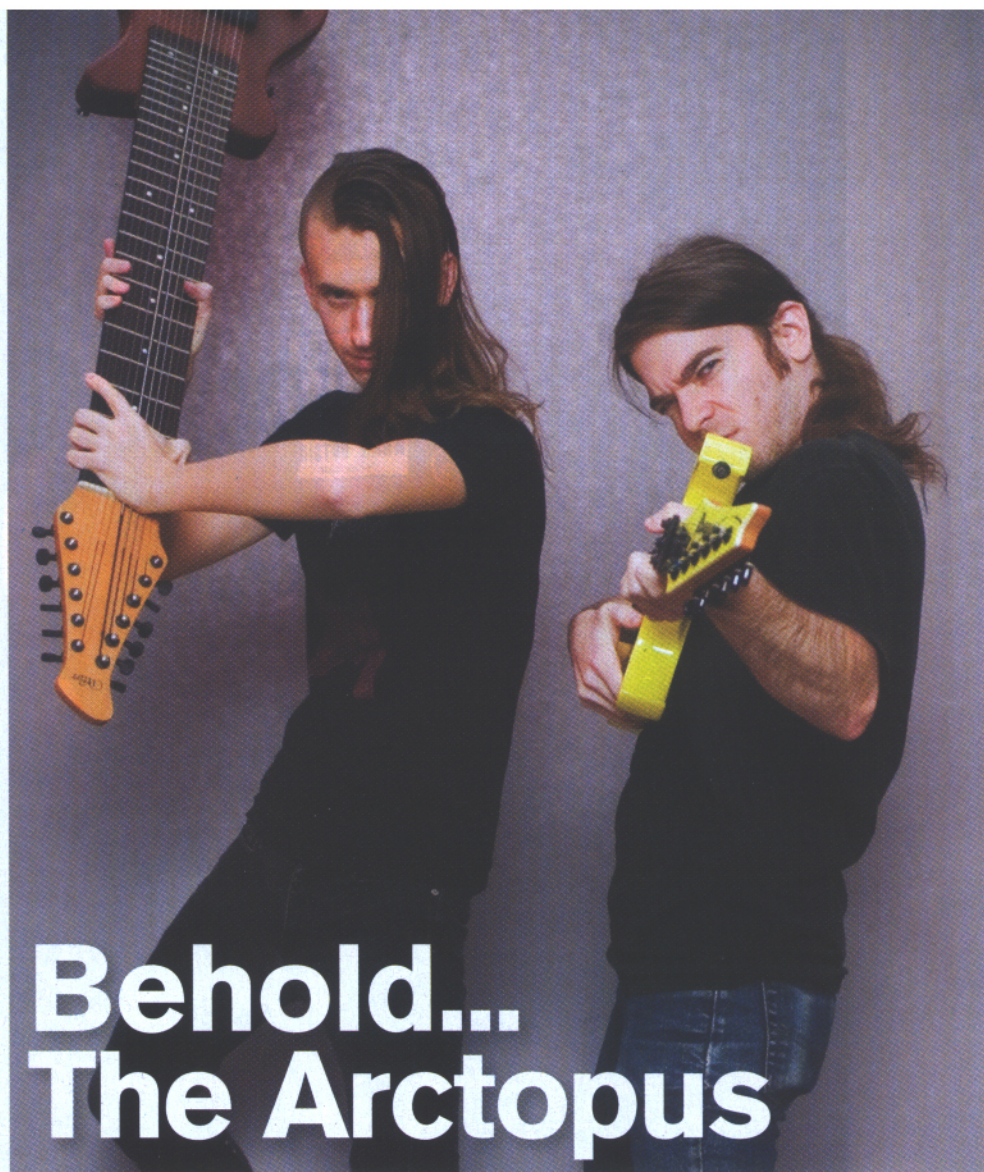
If Strays frontman Toby Marriott's last name looks vaguely familiar, it should. As the son of Humble Pie and Small Faces vocalist Steve Marriott, the U.K.-born songwriter has a lot



to live up to. But instead of emulating the mod rock his father pioneered, he and his group opt to combine everything from pogo punk to power pop on their debut, *Le Futur Noir* (TVT).

While critics may wind up accusing the Los Angeles act of drawing a bit too heavily on certain influences, guitarist Jeff Saenz is quick to stress that, well, that's sort of the point. "We aren't afraid to wear our influences on our sleeves," he explains. "We're totally honored when people catch the resemblance between us and the bands we love so much." And while it may seem odd for an album that begins with the Nirvana-esque "Geneva Code" to also include the reggae vibe of "Let Down Girls" (which could easily be a *London Calling* outtake), the Strays' music ultimately works because the songs share a common dynamic: massive hooks.

So what's next for the Strays? "We want to get to Jamaica to record the next album," Marriott says in his thick British accent. "We have tons of reggae songs, and we'd love to mix up that sound with the punk stuff. Why not, you know?" —JONAH BAYER



## Behold... The Arctopus

### Tech-metal trio make uneasy listening music

**GEAR BOX**  
**GUITARISTS**  
Mike Lerner (R),  
Colin Marston

**AXES** LERNER:  
1989 Ibanez RG;  
MARSTON: 12-string  
Warr guitar

**AMPS** LERNER:  
Peavey 5150 II,  
Madison 4X12  
cab; MARSTON:  
Hartke 3500 bass  
head, Eden cab,  
Roland JC-120

**FX** LERNER: Line  
6 DL4, Electro-  
Harmonix POG,  
Boss NS-2; MAR-  
STON: Morley dis-  
tortion; Sovtek  
Big Muff; Boss  
PS-3, MT-2,  
and DD-5

**G**iven the bewildering levels of aggression, dissonance, and compositional difficulty in Behold...The Arctopus's fierce instrumental tech-metal, you might be surprised to learn that the New York City trio's earliest influences are rather predictable.

"King Crimson, or specifically Trey Gunn, introduced me to the instrument I play," says Warr guitarist Colin Marston, whose two-handed tapping on the odd-looking 12-string guitar makes Gunn sound tame in comparison. "Looking back on [Crimson's] music, it's not the most complex stuff out there, but it opened me to accepting complexity as something interesting and positive."

Guitarist Mike Lerner, who co-founded BTA with Marston and a drum machine in 2002—they eventually found a capable human timekeeper in Charlie Zeleny—began his own musical trek at age five, studying classical piano. Guns N' Roses changed all that. "At around 12, I realized that I liked Slash," says Lerner, who later studied jazz composition under Bruce Arnold at New York University. "Enough with this piano, I thought. I've got to play guitar! From there it was Metallica, then Megadeth. And then Dream Theater comes up at age 14, and I'm like, 'Holy shit! This is the end.'"

On BTA's recent collection of EPs and live material, *Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning* (Blackmarket Activities/Metal Blade), Lerner and Marston turn progressive metal on its conservatory-trained ear, unleashing a dizzying array of distorted riffs, Warr-hammered bass lines, and single-note licks that sound closer to Schoenberg than Slayer. And if a track like "Exospacial Psionic Aura" feels exhausting to listen to, at almost eight minutes, you should see what it takes to *play* the thing.

"We've technically got another EP written right now," says Marston, "but it *feels* like an album. We tend to compose above our own abilities, so while a song may come together in a week, it takes us another six or eight months just to learn it."

John Petrucci, the gauntlet's been thrown down. —AARON BURGESS

ANNA DICKSON



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**MAY/JUN 2007**



05

**INSIDE**  
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**OR EVERLASTING FIRE?**

# IMMOLATION

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## UNDERGROUND IN NEW YORK BENEATH THE REMAINS...

**A**s a place which has exported the likes of Sonic Youth, The Velvet Underground, Khanate, The Ramones, The New York Dolls, and, er, Madball, New York City is one of those places which churns out such diverse, genre-defining legends yet which are all intrinsically 'New York Bands'. Despite the possible dominance of bland indie rock in the shape of The Strokes *et al*, the current state of bands emerging from the big apple is as healthy as ever. Refining it to the realms of avant-garde and experimental metal and noise, it's not hard to find a legion of new bands who may come from the home of poseur-artistry nonsense, yet are keeping it as real as ever.

# START SPREADING the news

Behold...The  
Arctopus [2.1]

## Time Of Orchids [1.1]

**T**ime Of Orchids' unique blend moves from freeform punk-jazz to otherworldly sounds and unpinned experimentalism, earning them comparisons to kindred spirits Kayo Dot and a home on John Zorn's Tzadik records. However, pretentious nonsense this is not. "New York is bold. You have to be bold enough to stand up to the skyscrapers and argue with assholes on the street. To be freezing one minute and scalding the next. I don't even know if it's pretentiousness or adaptability, but there's certainly a high degree of drama that goes into what we do," explains vocalist/ keyboardist Chuck Stern. Of the influence of New York on the quartet he says, "A lot of our music is influenced by our surroundings. This will be even clearer on our upcoming album. To rock is to be bound by a grid, not unlike that of a city. To strive for more than rock is to live past the grid, which we attempt to do in the band and alone in our homes. Some people see New York as a limitation; I see it as a place where you can truly have it all and do everything at once. It is hectic and euphoric, like the music." It's clear Time Of

Orchids are one of those bands which thrive on the associations and support from their peers without much fitting in anywhere. Among their favourite NY bands they cite Child Abuse, Behold...The Arctopus and Hazel Rah (all also in this feature), as well as Zs, The Handsome Public, The Drayton Sawyer Gang and Extra Life. "There are certainly many places to play, which is great, but again, we play with all sorts of bands/ artists and although we're 'down' with many of them, we really have no allegiance to any one kind of music or band, nor are we actually part of any scene. I think you could say we're as much a part of a scene as Godflesh or Captain Beefheart ever were." With a new album released on Cuneiform in September and nothing to suggest there might not be five more after that one, as a highly productive experimental band Time Of Orchids are reassuringly consistent in a genre which can get weighed down with the tosh.. **formed 1999 band url** [www.timeoforchids.com](http://www.timeoforchids.com) **label url** [www.tzadik.com](http://www.tzadik.com) **current release** sarcast while

**C**omments regarding Behold...The Arctopus usually begin with a) is that the band who play the crazy guitar? [it's called a Warr guitar] and b) what exactly is an Arctopus? [a mythical half man half octopus creature]. A prolific bunch, members of Behold... are involved in projects including Dysrhythmia, Byla and a keyboard duo with Jordan Rudess of Dream Theatre. But Behold... is not a part time thing. "Well for me this band is my creative priority. I look at the band as a blank canvas where I can envision any sound and have it realized. It's rare to find the musicians who are capable of that. The rest is either fun or survival as far as music /work goes," guitarist Mike Lerner explains, with Colin Marsten viewing none of his bands as a 'side project'. Whilst their technical prowess can not really be overplayed, it sometimes distracts from the entire experience. But, as Colin says, "It just so happens that the music I want to write sometimes requires advanced technique but to me the composition is the focus - the most important part. Don't get hung up on technique!" Their intelligent, jaw-droppingly complex, avant-garde progressive metal puts them in a prime

position in a scene which has each corner of their sound. As Lerner puts it, "We like where we fit - we seem to be at the crossroads of metal-meets-weird-meets-indie/ punk. There are many bands that share that amorphous, but like-minded type; you have proggy/ jazzy like Time Of Orchids, Friendly Bears, No Use For Humans, Zs; mathy/ indie/ spazzy like Stay Fucked, Archaeopteryx, Child Abuse, Mick Barr - and these are all NY area bands and we've played with all of them, some many times over the years." Certainly a band experiencing relative success right now, at least in the UK, although there's not much to suggest it's going to transform them. "We are far from pretentious people - we are poor and humble.... As far as living in NY I think many people make the mistake that all of NY is like Times Square with the lights and the expensive restaurants... we live in quiet and manageable neighbourhoods... not much different from most places in America." **formed 2002 band url** [www.beholdthearctopus.com](http://www.beholdthearctopus.com) **label url** [www.blackmarketactivities.com](http://www.blackmarketactivities.com) **current release** nano-nucleonic cyborg summoning ep



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## ALL SHALL PERISH

THE PRICE OF EXISTENCE

GRADE: A

(Nuclear Blast)

All Shall Parish is a metal fan's metal band. Refusing to be limited by the confines of sub-genre stereotypes, this Oakland five-piece takes everything there is to love about heavy music, loads it all up into a giant bulldozer and drives the damn thing over your house. Brutal death, technical guitar wizardry, pummeling breakdowns, hardcore slam guttural growls, infectious melody, headbanging hooks and even the obligatory acoustic passage or two; it's all here. After hearing this category F5 tornado of molten metal all you can do is wait for the dust to settle, admit your ass just got kicked and listen to it all over again.

—Ryan Ogle



## ALL THAT REMAINS

THE FALL OF IDEALS

GRADE: A

(Prosthetic Records)

All That Remains laid it all on the line, and what remains is one of the best metal records of 2006. *The Fall of Ideals* is a multi-layered musical masterpiece that blends the range of Phil Labonte's vocals with Mike Martin and Oli Herbert's technical guitar proficiency. Their solos are neither distracting nor misplaced, while an intense double bass pounds throughout the album helping to add a crucial element missing on their previous releases. "Not Alone," "The Weak Willed" and "Indictment" are standout tracks that truly exhibit the band's diversity, strength, ability and growth. *The Fall of*

*Ideals* will begin to release All That Remains from any genre ties and begin to cement their place at the top.

—Andrew Gargano



## ANGTORIA

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR US ALL

GRADE: A-

(Listenable)

That Sarah Jezebel Deva can sing her ass off in a range of styles from the sultry to the operatic is no big surprise. Just listen to her work with Cradle of Filth, Therion, and Mortuus. But who could have anticipated the musical brilliance of Angtoria's *God Has a Plan for Us All*, her collaboration with composer Chris Rehn (Abyssos)? A stunning marriage of metal heft and scintillating orchestration, her mellifluous voice soars across compositions that are absolutely beautiful from a symphonic standpoint, yet pack enough punch to keep things squarely in rockin' territory. In addition to the orchestral bombast, songs like "Deity of Disgust" move closer to progressive metal. It all works splendidly. In a word: breathtaking.

—Scott Alisoglu



## ARMY OF ANYONE

ARMY OF ANYONE

GRADE: B+

(The Firm)

Given the members' respective resumes, Army of Anyone couldn't be a less fitting moniker for this band. With Dean Deleo (Guitar) and Robert Deleo (Bass) of Stone Temple Pilots, Richard Patrick of Filter (Vocals) and session drummer phenom Ray

Luzier, there are a more than a few "someones" in this band. Their individual talent and experience has yielded a high-energy assault on radio rock, loaded with infectious hooks and grunge-drenched riffs. Songs like "It Doesn't Seem to Matter," "Stop, Look and Listen" and "Generation" deliver on every front, from the vocals to the phenomenal fretwork. One listen to the record and each member becomes instantly recognizable, but the band identity has been completely realized yet. The slower fare like the album closer "This Wasn't Supposed to Happen" shows Army of Anyone's underlying chemistry and some promise for a very bright future. For now though, this army defends rock quite well.

—Rick Florino



## AUDIOSLAVE

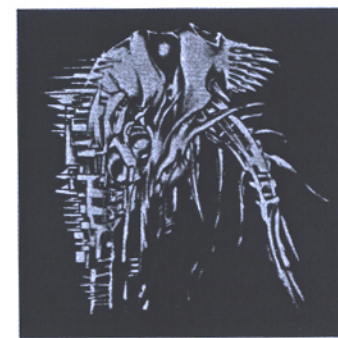
REVELATIONS

GRADE: B

(Sony / Epic)

After coming *Out of Exile*, Audioslave's latest is aptly titled. It's if the band awoke to the fundamental funk inside and harnessed it to the fullest on "One and the Same," "Original Fire" and "Broken City." Cornell has never grooved so much and Morello's fretwork has never been spacier. However, that slower more contemplative fare such as "Like a Stone" that made Audioslave's debut so poignant, only surfaces shortly in the title track and once or twice more on the album. Regardless, the band get down more than ever.

—Rick Florino



## BEHOLD THE ARCTOPUS

NANO-NUCLEONIC CYBORG SUMMONING

GRADE: B

(BlackMarket Activities)

Behold the Arctopus display an interesting mix of progressive metal that will make you question everything, beginning with the name of the band. I have no idea what an Arctopus is but I want to capture one to keep in a cooler just for the pure enjoyment of it. *Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning* has a way of memorizing you with its music while you are waiting for the singer to come join the fun. However, since there is no singer, you can focus on the loud, aggressive, yet theatrical music made by one guitar, drums, and a "warr guitar" which is a 12-string instrument that doubles as a bass. The CD makes me want to pound my fist in the air and just scream "Fuck Yeah". In a weird way...I love it. **Disclaimer:** RUIN does not suggest you travel the world looking for an Arctopus. Instead, just plug in the CD and rock!

—Rachel Carmine



## BLACK LABEL SOCIETY

SHOT TO HELL

GRADE: B-

(Roadrunner Records)

Have major label execs finally tamed the guitar-playing beast? It appears so. There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that Zakk Wylde can shred with the best of them, but the biggest complaint surrounding *Shot to Hell* isn't that this is a bad Zakk album, but rather that it's a disappointing Black Label Society album. BLS was never intended to be another *Pride and Glory*, and likewise *Pride and Glory* was never intended to be Zakk Wylde's *Book of Shadows*. BLS seemed the outlet for all music too heavy for Zakk's previous endeavors. And this is where the disappointment sets in. Die-hard fans may liken their reaction to that of the *Hangover Music* release, but at least in that case the title was a bit of a warning. *Shot to Hell* is a great record and is characteristic of Wylde and his abilities, but not of Black Label Society. Although Zakk's abilities are showcased, the more aggressive elements that constitute Black Label Society are



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## Behold...The Arctopus Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning Blackmarket Activities/Metal Blade



**B**ehold... The Arctopus' debut for Blackmarket/Metal Blade isn't actually all that new as it compiles their *Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning* and *Arctocalypse Now...* *Warragaddon Later* EPs, plus a four-song live set, onto one perplexing disc of instrumental noodling, trigonometrical shredding and cosmic musical exploration. Given that founding member Colin Marston (also of Dysrhythmia) steps outside of the ordinary and plays a Warr Guitar — a 12-string instrument that covers the range of both guitar and bass and is played primarily by tapping — is your first indication that BTA are going to eclipse the likes of instru-metal faves like Pelican and Red Sparowes, shred heads like Satriani and Vai and even Dysrhythmia in the progressive and weirdness stakes. Not that that's the band's goal. It would appear that the focus at hand is to construct panoptic and compendious tunes that showcase not only the individual talents of Marston, guitarist Mike Lerner and drummer Charlie Zeleny, but also their collective smarts in and out of passages both terse and expansive, their prowess at stopping on a dime in the midst of some bizarrely structured measure and improv abilities when given some room to breathe within the confines of claustrophobic tracks like "You Will Be Reincarnated As An Imperial Attack Space Turtle" and "Alcoholocaust." Each song is an ever-morphing journey through a host of extreme and progressive sounds and influences — blastbeats, off-kilter polyrhythms, lightning-fast orpeggiated runs, skittish tapping, dissonant counterpoint, violently angular noisecore riffs and so on — which probably won't appeal much to those outside of like-minded musicians and beard-stroking, pedantic, theory-obsessed fans of Ron Jarzombek, Atheist, Orthrelm, Cynic and Al DiMeola, although the live tracks show that there's a somewhat PBR-fuelled element of rowdiness to the band's following. If anything, *Nano-Nucleonic* will hopefully inspire musicians of all degrees of skill and experience to expand their musical voices. At the same time, with some luck, I personally hope it inspires some of music's more soulless practitioners and those content to rehash what's popular in the quest for beer, chicks, fame and fortune, to put their instruments down and go somewhere else. [www.beholdtheartopus.com] — Kevin Stewart-Panko

## Torture Storm Alert Reissue Escapi

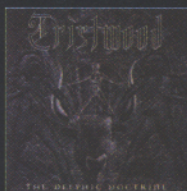


**T**he intro to the reissue of Torture's 1989 thrashfest *Storm Alert* says it all, really. Sounding like it could've been lifted directly from the soundtrack to *Children Of The Corn*, it firmly dates the album from a musical standpoint. In the case of *Storm Alert*, though, sometimes being dated isn't such a bad thing.

Bonus points should go to these Texans for not only using the word "ignominious" in a song title, but also as part of the chorus to the Slayer-worship of "Ignominious Slaughter" (the vocals are undeniably of the Aroya school of delivery — raw, but understandable). And while a cursory listen may cause some to write Torture off as a third-tier thrash act content to recycle the ideas of Death Angel (circa *Ultraviolence*), Artillery and the aforementioned Slayer, there's surprising originality to be found here. The epic-length "Dwell Into Surreality" never once becomes boring or tedious, the band employing lengthy instrumental passages to season the 11+ minutes of the song. I could've done without the children's sing-along beginning of "Slay Ride", which itself could've stood to have had about half of its seven minutes cut off with no great loss. The hook is what it was all about back in 1989 and Torture are no slough-offs in that department — "Terror Kingdom" and "Enter The Chamber" revive memories of metal that inspired pits involving circles; not Kung-Fu dance competitions.

Despite never having seen a Stateside release until now, *Storm Alert* benefits from a brand new Neil Kernon remix, which I'm sure added its share of weight to an already-solid album. Those who wish Slayer would write another *Seasons In The Abyss* would do well to pick up this testament to all that was good about late '80s thrash because it doesn't look like the Slayer thing is happening anytime soon. [www.tortureband.com] — Lord Randall

## Tristwood The Delphic Doctrine Sound Riot



**I**magine the sound of a Casio keyboard played inside a can of Diet Caffeine Free Pepsi, and you'll have a fairly accurate aural image of *The Delphic Doctrine*. I'm not sure about the spiritual leanings of Tristwood, but I'd think twice about joining any cult with ritual music this thin and tinny. Passable death vox and the nearly raw sound of the guitar production give the title track a bit of heft, but the drummer's lever seems to flip from only blast to blah, and serves only to make a potentially tolerable song utterly unlistenable. I'm also not steadfast in my belief that any real drums were used during the recording of *The Delphic Doctrine*, so predictable is the click-track apocalypse. They keys only make it all worse turning Tristwood into some freakish hybrid of KMFDM-lite and a junior high Ancient History class trying their damndest to be Nile and failing miserably. Vocalist Axumis has a fairly decent black metal scream... and so does my grandmother if you ran her voice through the myriad effects and processors surely used on this album. Take away the "drumming," trebly guitars and rubber-band bass loop and what you have in "By The Call Of Seth - Invocation Of The God Of Blood And War" is — I shit you not — the "Axel F" theme from *Beverly Hills Cop*! None of these songs actually go anywhere, fostering the opinion that Tristwood had one "okay" song and figured the thing to do would be to split the *good* parts up over the course of a full-length album, hoping that one tolerable part flung haphazardly into each song would make the lot seem interesting.

If Axumis would just resign himself to his listenable death rumble and find a band not so caught up in making extreme music something you could pogo to, he might have a chance of treading water. But for now, *The Delphic Doctrine* is merely the result of a Rammstein vs. Bal-Sagoth mud wrestling match, with neither party emerging the winner, least of all those who had to suffer through listening to this shitstorm. A finale note to Tristwood: Tossing the word "motherfucker" into the chorus of a song for supposed shock value doesn't make you seem hard; it makes you seem illiterate. [www.tristwood.com] — Lord Randall

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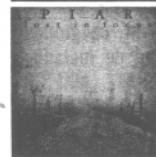






quelque peu amochée ces dernières années. Ayant été récupérés par Nuclear Blast, à la suite de leur échec chez Virgin, les revoilà nous offrant leur 7e album studio. Un nouveau chanteur fait son entrée. Tomi Joutsen remplace Pasi Koskinen qui officiait depuis ELEGY (Relapse, 1996). D'entrée de jeu, Amorphis nous balance tout ce qui les caractérise lors des trois premières chansons. Vocal gras, vocal clean et harmonies mémorables. C'est surtout le retour des voix death/grasses qui retiennent l'attention. On les avait perdues de vue sur les derniers albums et c'est avec plaisir que l'on retrouve cette diversité au niveau vocal. Musicalement, Amorphis nous démontre qu'il maîtrise bien son jeu. Toujours une petite harmonie qui nous facilite la mémorisation, soit une petite lead comme sur la 2e pièce "House Of Sleep" ou bien un piano bien placé comme dans la fin de la 4e pièce "Born From Fire" et au début de la 5e pièce "Under A Soil And Black Stone". On ne peut dire un retour en arrière pour les Finlandais, mais plutôt une belle continuité dans leur évolution musicale. Mixant les meilleurs éléments de chaque album pour nous présenter un produit de qualité comme ils l'ont toujours fait. Nuclear Blast leur a également laissé la chance de produire eux-mêmes leur album. Qui de mieux placé pour faire sonner un album d'Amorphis qu'eux-mêmes? Ils ne rallieront peut-être pas leur vieille génération de fans. Mais pour Amorphis, l'important est d'avancer et nous présenter un excellent produit. Chose faite. **NOTE : 8,5/10**

**APIARY, LOST IN FOCUS**  
Ironclad Recordings (2006)  
États-Unis - Métalcore  
Par Zef



Toute une leçon en métalcore que Apiary nous réserve ici avec LOST IN FOCUS. Apiary est un excellent exemple du genre de métalcore que j'adore particulièrement. Il y a un mur de son qui sort des speakers. Il y a un côté assez technique avec un petit coté jazzé qui font faire des changements à 180 degrés dans les chansons. On dirait un peu du Ion Dissonance, ou Dillinger Escape Plan, mais plus accentué vers le métalcore plutôt que le mathcore. LOST IN FOCUS contient une panoplie de riffs de guitare dissonants et aigus que j'adore, comme par exemple au début de la chanson "Descent" vers les 20 secondes. Les chansons sont en constant mouvement. Chaque chanson possède sa propre personnalité, ses propres caractéris-

tiques, qui font en sorte que l'album ne devient jamais redondant. Il y toujours quelque chose pour retenir mon attention, que ce soit le vocal, la guitare ou le drum. Et ça donne le goût de headbanger en masse. Le vocal est aussi assez agressif pour un band métalcore. Il est évident que le gars n'est pas content. Le drum est aussi très dynamique. Il y a rarement le même pattern de drum qui revient sans arrêt. En fait, je dirais même que le drum est probablement l'élément le plus jazzé de l'album. Et que dire des guitares? Il y a un mur de son de guitares qui sort de tous bords, tous côtés. Ça n'arrête pas une seconde, ou presque. Ce sont les genres de petits riffs saccadés et secs enchaînés à contretemps et qui se perchent sur le seuil de la dissonance. Mais le tout est maîtrisé correctement afin de ne pas tomber totalement dans le chaos sonore. Une excellente découverte et je le recommande à tous les amateurs de métalcore. **NOTE : 9/10**

**BEHEMOTH, DEMONICA**  
Regain Records (2006)  
Pologne - Black/Blackened Death  
Par Łukasz K. Ampleman



Après une tournée nord-américaine triomphante et un printemps de concerts dans leur contrée polonaise, nos bardes de la noire baltique ont livré en date du 06.06.06 leur évocatoire DEMONICA. Le coffret rassemble 23 anciennes pièces sur deux CD. D'abord des pièces tirées de bandes démo ou de préproduction : THE RETURN OF THE NORTHERN MOON (1992) et FROM THE PAGAN WASTLAND (1993). On y retrouvera également des trames jamais parues sur CD, réenregistrées ou encore des versions nouvelles de pièces déjà enregistrées à l'époque des sessions de studio de SVENDEVITH : STORMING NEAR THE BALTIC (1994), AND THE FOREST DREAM ETERNALLY (1994) et de GROM (1996). Aussi bien dire que la légion behemothienne de fans de la dernière heure sera déroutée. Nous sommes bien loin ici de la résonance profondément ténébreuse Death/Black qui caractérise le groupe d'aujourd'hui. Loin aussi de la voix costaude expectorée de Nergal, des mitrilles surréalistes d'Inferno, des quelques emportements progressifs, de l'ambiance remplissante et du mastering achevé des plus récents albums. DEMONICA nous ramène essentiellement aux balbutiements du groupe avec son black métal cru et la voix plus aigüe et crachotée du jeune Nergal. Le premier démo THE RETURN OF THE NORTHERN MOON nous apparaîtra plus froid et lourd, parfois martial, rempli de vociférations plaintives, et de superposi-

tions de dark ambient et de black métal. Les pièces tirées des sessions de FROM THE PAGAN WASTLAND sont généralement plus rythmées, mélodiques et recèlent parfois de riffs "rock & doom". En réenregistrant TRANSYLVANIAN FORREST et SPELLCRAFT AND HEAVENDOM, Behemoth remet au goût du jour deux pièces de son ancien répertoire. Le Coruscant livret qui accompagne DEMONICA fera le bonheur des fans. Nombreuses photos inédites, témoignages d'anciens membres du groupe, paroles de chansons perdues et retrouvées. Le projet (limité à 10 000 exemplaires) constitue une bonne occasion de faire un rattrapage des premières années d'une formation furieuse qui s'est forgé la réputation d'être l'une des plus travaillantes de toute la scène de musique sombre des 15 dernières années. Pour sa valeur historique davantage que musicale. **NOTE : 8/10**

**BEHOLD... THE ARCTOPUS (...)**  
Black Market Activities (2006)  
États-Unis - Prog Avant-garde  
Par PsyKoTopus



**NANO-NUCLEONIC CYBORG SUMMONING** comporte trois nouvelles chansons, plus le MCD ARCTOPOCALYPSE NOW... WARMAGEDDON LATER et un set live. Dès les premières mesures, on n'a pas vraiment une idée claire de ce qui nous attend. "Exospacial Psionic Aura" commence comme du gros death : sur les chapeaux de roue. Mais ensuite, le popping de la bass et les rythmes spastiques annoncent un virage beaucoup plus progressif, pendant 7:31. Le groupe newyorkais s'en donne à cœur joie dans son métal expérimental progressif d'avant-garde instrumental. BTA compte dans ses rangs Colin Marston (Byla, Dysrhythmia and Infidel? / Castro!), qui joue de la Warr Guitar, une sorte de monstre à 12-cordes utilisé pour faire du tapping (comme celle qu'avait Trey Gunn, ex-King Crimson), le guitariste Mike Lerner et le batteur, Charlie Zeleny. Tous très talentueux. On parle ici de tripeux de musique qui s'amuse à nous écartiller les oreilles avec leur musique de fou, totalement déjantée, imprégnée de jazz, prog et métal extrême. Parce que ça reste passablement extrême pour le genre. Et les gars sont des sprinteurs de frets... ils arpentent le manche de la guitare à la vitesse d'un Ben Johnson sur le stanzolol. On a affaire à de véritables virtuoses, ça s'entend. La première moitié de "Estrogen/Pathogen Exchange Program" est plus atmosphérique/ambiante, mais ensuite, ça revient davantage à du prog métal plus classique à la Rush, incluant un petit solo de drum pas piqué des vers.

"Sensory Amusia" poursuit dans la même veine, permettant une fois de plus à quel point les gars sont capables de faire à peu près tout. Les contretemps sont légion ici. Heureusement, le groupe est capable de mélodies, comme ce petit pont vers la marque des 2 minutes. L'autre MCD compte deux chansons, un peu moins éclatées. Les chansons live démontrent que les gars ne sont pas juste bons dans un studio. Globalement, c'est un bon album. D'abord, parce qu'il est hautement technique, pour ne pas dire exagérément technique. Ensuite, parce qu'il se passe quand même quelque chose du côté chanson, même si ce n'est pas suffisamment à mon goût. En fait, je ne pense pas réécouter cet album, ce n'est juste pour moi. Mais si vous tripez prog et technique, jetez une oreille du côté de ce groupe extraterrestre, il va vous déculotter. **NOTE 8/10**

**BEYOND FEAR, BEYOND FEAR**  
SPV/Fusion III (2006)  
États-Unis - Heavy  
Par PsyKoRipper



Je vais mettre cartes sur table d'entrée de jeu, j'ai une certaine aversion pour Tim "Ripper" Owen. J'ignore pourquoi. J'm'en fous qu'il ait fronté Judas Priest après le départ de Rob Halford, parce que je ne l'ai pas plus aimé dans Iced Earth. C'est plus le fait que sa voix sonne tellement comme une copie de celle de Halford et aussi cet air Rock Star un peu suffisant (sans jeu de mots sur le film qui devait porter sur sa vie). Alors, bon, ça ne m'empêchera pas de faire un review le plus honnête possible de son plus récent projet solo, Beyond Fear. Dans ce groupe, Ripper renoue avec de vieux potes de Winters Bane, avec qui il a commencé sa carrière pro. Il s'agit du guitariste John Comprix, qui contribue plusieurs chansons à l'album, et du bassiste Dennis Hayes (Seven Witches). Si vous cherchez du contenu original, je vous invite tout de suite à aller voir ailleurs. Il n'y a pas rien sur cet album que vous n'avez pas déjà entendu ailleurs, à moins que vous ne soyez nés de la dernière pluie. Mais bon, si le heavy dans la veine de PAINKILLER de Judas Priest vous branche, jetez donc une oreille à cet album. L'album comporte quelques grandes forces, dont la puissante voix de Ripper qui est vraiment utilisée à son plein potentiel ici. Il faut lui donner ça, le mec, il peut gueuler comme peu d'autres vocalistes. La production est aussi assez intense, merci à John Morris et son Morrisound Studio. Pour le reste, ça demeure dans les conventions du heavy US. Comprix nous pond de bons riffs bien sentis et quelques solos



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vocalist Michael Kiske (original after Kai Hansen fielded vocals on *Walls of Jericho* that is) departed following the about-face albums *Chameleon* and *Pink Bubbles Go Ape*, most fans are endeared to Kiske's high falsettos and traditional Euro metal wails that are part of what dates the first two *Keeper of the Seven Keys* albums. This is not meant as an insult; you just simply *know* these albums because Kiske helms them commandingly and Hansen and Weikath provide some of the most memorable solos in metal's history, all leading to the commercial success of *Keeper of the Seven Keys Part II*. I recall seeing the video for "I Want Out" and instantly wondered what was up with HELLOWEEN. Direct, conventional, and...yes, catchy as hell...the song lacked the poignant progression HELLOWEEN had built for itself, but damn if that video wasn't funny and by the time *Keeper of the Seven Keys Part II* dropped, all worries were forgotten. Sculpting even more splendor to fast-paced songs like "Eagle Fly Free" and "Save Us," while embracing more of the power metal side to HELLOWEEN on songs like "Rise and Fall" and "We Got the Right," *Keeper of the Seven Keys Part II* is less bluntness and more finesse, even with the outright silliness of "Dr. Stein," which Andi Deris told me in an interview earlier this year is just part of HELLOWEEN's schtick. Perhaps a band that has been so revered and taken so seriously by its fans needs a hammy side in order to stay honest. Whatever the case, "Dr. Stein" is a goofy, highly likeable song that stays the intensity of the "Keeper of the Seven Keys" epic, which, like the rest of the album, is pure magic, particularly once Kai Hansen and Michael Weikath are turned loose. Featuring bonus tracks on each disc, notably the less sophisticated and more streamlined B-side tracks "Savage" and "Livin' Ain't No Crime" on *Keeper Part II* and the very cool "Victims of Fate" on *Keeper Part I*, these reissues are essential purchases, even if you're to suffer the criminal deconstruction known as the "Halloween Video Edit." Call it kvetching if you want, but one listen to the original masterwork is all the proof positive you need...

## ORGY OF THE DAMNED AWARD OF THE MONTH:

### SOCIETY 1

#### *The Years of Spiritual Dissent* Crash Music

Perhaps only the GENITORTURERS or Wendy O. Williams enjoyed more blatant rock 'n roll fuckery than SOCIETY 1. When you consider the origins of this bombastic metal band stemmed by association from the porn industry, it's interesting to see where SOCIETY 1 ultimately ended up. Engaging in every debauched corner and filling every receptive orifice with hungry cock, SOCIETY 1, led by Matt "The Lord" Zane evolved from a maniacal nu-metal era act with more onstage T&A than MOTLEY CRUE and RATT combined

in their day to become something a bit more serious. Before they were dropped from Earache Records, Zane had perfected the art of bodily suspension in SOCIETY 1's stage set, culminating in a 40,000 witness spectacle at Europe's Download Festival. Seven years from when they started, the fate of SOCIETY 1 has now been scooped into the nurturing hands of Crash Music, who lets it all hang out, if you will, on this CD/DVD overview *The Years of Spiritual Dissent*. While some people may have dismissed SOCIETY 1 as a KORN knockoff or a DOPE or MURDERDOLLS facsimile, none of these comparables had the genuine lowbrow "fuck you" attitude of SOCIETY 1. With the bald-faced statement declared by "This is the End," SOCIETY 1 takes a grimmer grind from its WHITE ZOMBIË base and declares themselves ambassadors of a subversive movement of hedonism that more than competes with the hard-on hellions of eighties sleaze metal. When you watch the accompanying DVD *In Our Own Images*, the only thing missing from this sweaty video is penetration! Not even MANOWAR's *Hell on Earth* DVD series can match the nudity and nihilism of SOCIETY 1; watching the band dump the contents of their spent condoms onto a nude vixen is as close to pure pornography as can be permitted here. As Zane discusses his band's self-gratifying history filled with stories of past members' drug problems, along with backstage spankings and onstage crowd taunting, we see SOCIETY 1 become more of a cult art statement instead of a reason to publicly copulate in the name of metal. Given that many of today's metal artists keep their extracurricular activities to themselves, this unashamed recollection by Zane and his cohorts Sin and Dirt is titillating, reprehensible and enviable all in the same breath. Musically, SOCIETY 1 is about challenging norms, pre-existing beliefs and surrendering to one's urges, as songs like "Let's Do It," "So it Dies," covers of Alice Cooper's "Sick Things" and BLACK SABBATH's "Who Are You," and "Thinking is the Link" are intercut by spoken word pieces by Zane, who relays well-written and sometimes disturbing verses that drags the listener deeper into his twisted psychosexual world. As quickly as Zane is wont to grind his crotch into a heckler's face, he is swift to question the sexuality that led him into the porn industry and ultimately as a devilish frontman unafraid to puncture his skin with hooks and hoist himself atop a crowd for even greater shock value. That being said, *The Years of Spiritual Dissent* is a deep examination of a band that was as close to an underground Public Enemy #1 as THE MENTORS or GG ALLIN. As Zane is shown visiting the grave of Jim Morrison in the bonus material of the DVD, it's amazing to see what Zane has gotten away with in his career while his hero was once busted for a disputed penis wagging incident. It might not be out of the question then to consider Matt Zane a modern-day Lizard King...

## BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS

### *Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning* Metal Blade Records

Call it VOIVOD meets PSYOPUS...it's frankly amazing to see how far things have evolved since PRIMUS's *Friggle Fry* and *Pork Soda* albums and Les Claypool's inventive bass playing, along with his sheer affinity towards weirdness. New York's BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS want you to both remember and forget PRIMUS given the manic frenzy of this reissued EP that will rattle you senseless with their precision and their hit-and-run disorder. Is it noise or is it art? The answer is *yes*. As BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS clouts you with an unadulterated arsenal of cybernetic notes and titanic grooves, this album is exciting and maybe frustrating on occasion but it is *memorable*. You won't soon forget Colin Marston and his "warr guitar," a beastly 12-string weapon that combines the ranges of bass and guitar on one neck, nor will you forget the blazing accuracy of this trio who can rock out when they set their minds to it. Mostly BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS is a metal jam band to end all jam bands. "Sensory Amusa" is less a song as it sensory *overload*, a blitzing series of jam-based flotsam that is nuts even for FANTOMAS. It *is* a journey unto itself as the calming Steve Vai-like sequences blissfully intercedes the brusque mayhem that precedes and follows it. It is "You Will Be Incarnated As An Imperial Attack Spaceturtle," aided by some random RUSH splashes when BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS assembles an actual song even as it runs over eight minutes. It's the album's high point, particularly the wall the trio homogenizes impressively as a VOIVOD-like unit instead of showing off chops and licks as on previous tracks. *Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning* is busier than a porn star caught in the middle of a circle jerk...

## WAR OF AGES

### *Pride of the Wicked* Facedown Records

Two things I really dig about WAR OF AGES: one, they're a positive-minded Christian hardcore band and two, they have more brushstroked rhythms and meticulous note-layering than many of their contemporaries. On *Pride of the Wicked* the only thing that prevents WAR OF AGES from being an indisputably great band is their breakdown addiction. Call it their vice if you want, call it the vice of their peers, just call it a vice, period. You people know how I feel about breakdowns. Moving on before I turn this review into another interminable rant against the breakdown (of which I seem to do on a monthly basis, hint hint, musicians), let me reiterate the many positives of *Pride of the Wicked*. When WAR OF AGES strays away from the pigeonholing molds they're practically compelled to dive headfirst into, these guys have the tendency to write beautiful measures (the ending stanza of "Guide for the Masses" as an example, the





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## New Reflection

**MISERY SIGNALS**  
*Mirrors*  
Following the intensive tour cycle in support of their debut full-length, *Of Malice and the Magnum Heart*, Misery Signals found themselves in a peculiar position — both critically lauded and deceptively accessible, yet potentially derailed by the departure of vocalist Jesse Zaraska. *Mirrors* marks the debut

of new front-man Karl Schubach, who does an admirable job filling the void, and complements the group's slightly altered dynamic more competently than many anticipated. While not pushing the boundaries of their sound as much as they could have, *Mirrors* cements their position as one of the most accomplished and solid acts in the field. Opting for a less sumptuously

thick and processed mix than *Of Malice*, the album's groove hits harder, more frequently, and with a good deal more conscious aggression. Accordingly, the songwriting has steered towards a more consistent, yet no less complex approach, highlighting Stu Ross' and Ryan Morgan's soaring guitar leads and lurching, cleverly executed breakdowns. *Mirrors* is the sound of a group that has struggled through everything from the death of former band-mates to the loss of founding members, and is still clearly capable of dwarfing their peers and imitators. A must own. (Ferret, www.ferretstyle.com)

*Is the less elaborately layered, more direct production a conscious shift?*  
Morgan: Our last record was extremely produced, and this time around we wanted to get more of a vibe, and use more realistic sounds. We didn't do any preproduction or demo material in the studio like we did with *Of Malice and the Magnum Heart* — we didn't try to make the songs sound good on a production level. We just laid the ideas down and heard them back, and ended up re-recording stuff tons of times just for ourselves to listen to and develop — we let the songs come together more naturally.

*The songwriting seems more fluid and consistent, without sacrificing the technical aspects of your sound.*  
That's definitely one of the things we focused on. While we were writing, we were thinking about how [the listener's] relationship with an album grows. I really like that we don't use straightforward verse/chorus structures, but structure has a lot to do with how you remember a song, and wanting to hear certain parts again. We want you to have a relationship with it; I find those are always the best records.  
Max Deneau

inspiring fret board wizardry. An unusual bonus to any CD, live versions of several songs are tacked onto the end, proving that they aren't just a studio band. *Nano* will definitely make many year-end lists. (Metal Blade, www.metalblade.com)  
Jill Mikkelsen

### THE DAMASCUS INTERVENTION

*Carefully Built | Carelessly Destroyed*  
Finally able to shake off the cheese-metal stigma of the past, Charlotte, North Carolina has been rekindled as an indie hotbed for hardcore acts. Though the Damascus Intervention have nothing to do with the current Middle East unrest, this Queen City quintet do their best to keep pace with the Glass Casket bandwagon on their five-song debut EP "Purpose Driven Youth" and the Killwhitneydead-inspired "I Kiss My Sweetie with My Fist" swap ideas with neighbors Through the Eyes of the Dead. Between the Buried and Me comparisons fly as "The Last Days of Humanity" sports a proggy midsection amidst the gut-wrenching growls of vocalist Lee Hill. The enhanced disc also contains a brief live set, which takes no risks but does include two non-album cuts, "Life in a Mortal Body" and "Losing the Greatest Invention." Not as fluid and solo-heavy as the Acacia Strain but more melodic than the quick death of Misery Index, the Damascus Intervention enter the pit on the fatigued coattails of their peers. (Tribunal, www.tribunalrecords.net)  
Chris Ayers

### CRADLE OF FILTH

*Thornography*  
Cradle of Filth have gone heavy metal and strangely enough, it works. There are clear glimpses of "the band that was" on *Thornography* but even clearer visions of where they've been over the last couple of years. Demonic whispers of black metal, goth and classical orchestration wage war with the NWOBHM, classic thrash and the Ozzfest and metalcore sounds Cradle have been exposed to, and somehow it comes to a truce on some devastatingly catchy ground. Thematically, the band still deal in humour, horror and gothic fiction, but Dani Filth's vocals have been altered — less eardrum-splitting shrieking, more mid-range snarling and singing. *Thornography* includes crushing heaviness but it's the melodic songs that make the strongest impact. The record wraps up with a metalised cover of Heaven 17's "Temptation" and that final emphatic punctuation offers a vivid summary of what *Thornography* is about. (Roadrunner/Universal)  
Laura Wiebe Taylor

### DECIDE

*The Stench of Redemption*  
With the abrupt departure of founding guitarists Eric and Brian Hoffman, it looked as if after nearly 20 years Decide might have met their demise. Keeping with the pummeling nature of their music, Glen Benton and Steve Asheim were unwilling to relent with their attack, continuing to plough forward despite a pending lawsuit. Replacing the brothers are two of death metal's finest axe men: ex-Cannibal Corpse

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**BEHOLD...THE ARCTOPUS**  
*Nano-Nucleonic Cyborg Summoning*  
Bands pushing the envelope are more the stuff of legend than record sales. Behold...the Arctopus are the music nerd's equivalent of striking gold. Their torrential progressive experimentation shreds most of their contemporaries to pieces. Manic madness collides with drawn out, atmospheric moments, creating an avant-garde dynamic between noodling, thrash, melody and dissonance. Their take on jazz is more along the lines of Candiria than Dillinger Escape Plan but they easily devour each in terms of songwriting and musicianship. Colin Marston is a virtuoso on the war guitar, a twelve-string monster that covers the range of both a guitar and a bass, played primarily by tapping. Charlie Zeleny's beats are mind-boggling and the brief drum solo in "Estrogen/Pathogen Exchange Program" highlights his immense ability. Guitar player Mike Lerner contributes awe-