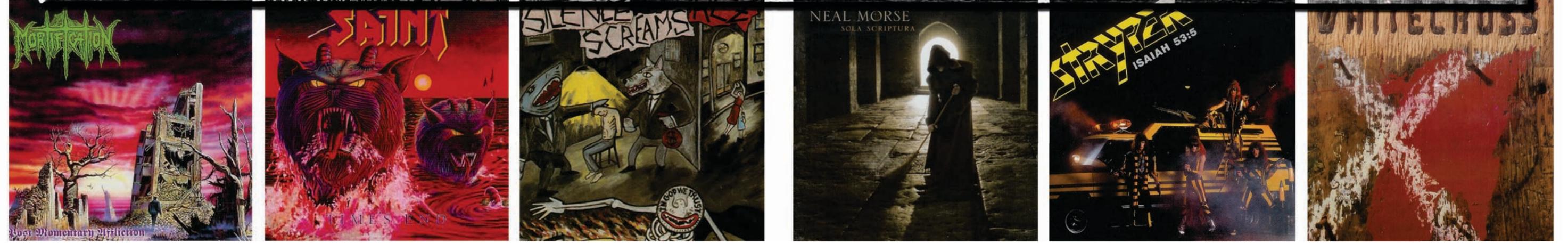




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**VISION - 5/T (25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)**

1985 classic featuring Billy Powell from Lynyrd Skynyrd! Remastered and on CD for the first time. Featuring exclusive liner notes by Steve Holland (founding member of Molly Hatchet)! Exclusive band bio and detailed liner notes. For fans of Kansas, Blue Oyster Cult, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Blackfoot, Pat Travers, Styx, Prodigal, and Petra!



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## METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



Ever wonder who's responsible for the sampler CDs that sometimes come with your issue of Heaven's Metal fanzine? It's none other than Matt Hunt. We thought we'd drill him with a few questions...

**Matt, exactly how many labels are you running these days? What are their names and their specialty or function?**

Born Twice Records is our label that focuses exclusively on early Jesus Music ('70s and some '80s). We have signed artists and bands like Amaziah, Randy Stonehill, Vision, and Exkursions, Mike Johnson, and Jimmy Hotz. We have some great Jesus rock reissues coming! Retroactive Records continues to focus on classic rock and metal. Some of these are reissues (like the first three Bride releases and Mass) and some are all new releases (like Rex Carroll and Deliverance). Bombworks Records focuses on extreme Christian metal – black, death, metalcore, and doom metal all find a place on Bombworks. We just signed a tremendous new band, Skies that will be releasing their debut album in 2011. Increase Decrease Records is a label that will be signing new bands that tour and play out a lot. Bands like I Am The Messenger and Kidnap the Sun are not heavy enough for Bombworks and way too current for Retroactive.

**What songs on this sampler stand out for you? Or do any of them have a small story attached to them? Tell me about one or a few.**

The Deus Invictus track is amazing progressive, technical, extreme metal featuring ex-The Chariot drummer. I love this band. Messiah was one of those reissues I have wanted to do ever since I started Retroactive Records – and I finally found them (thanks for the help, Olaf Becker!). The track "Final Warning"

is an absolute classic. I love it and am so grateful to be able to make those Messiah albums available! Vision was on Heartland Records in 1985 and released two rare albums featuring two Lynyrd Skynyrd guys. Both albums are so amazing and I am very excited to share these obscure gems with fans of classic Christian music! Daniel Band was my very first introduction to Christian hard rock, so that band is special for me. And "Undercover Christian" is my favorite track from their classic debut release *On Rock*. The Rex Carroll Band is one of my favorite hard rock/metal albums of all time. I picked "Circle of Love" for the insanely heavy riff, but any track could have gone on the compilation. They are all amazing songs from the *That Was Then, This Is Now* cd. Holy Blood continues to be an extreme metal genre bender. This band's ability to blend folk and black metal is like none other. This title track from their new album, *Shining Sun* shows that this band only gets better with age.

**What albums or artists are on the horizon that we can look forward to?**

The entire Barnabas catalog and the first three Bride releases plus the Matrix albums will be reissued. Look for the Mass 1984 EP + 1 bonus track on cd for the first time. Plus, we have Mass – *Fighter* releasing (1982 A&M album) for the first time ever! Randy Stonehill's rare *Stonehill* EP, Amaziah - *Straight Talker*, a new Deliverance (hopefully), The Orphaned Project, a new Jupiter VI, Saint – *Warriors of the Son* and unreleased albums by Messiah and Vision! We have some stunning releases on the horizon. Thanks so much for all the support from Heaven's Metal and from the fans who support these ministry bands and buy the releases! We seek to lift up the Name of Jesus in all we do. It is our prayer that these releases draw people closer to Him everyday!

### HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE EDITORIAL TEAM:

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### News bullets

**The Burial** will be releasing their Strike First debut album *The Winepress* on August 17th. You can hear two exclusive streaming tracks from the album this week on Alternative Press and Hails and Horns. Check out "Death Conquered" [ at [altpress.com/news/entry/exclusive\\_stream\\_the\\_burials\\_death\\_conquered](http://altpress.com/news/entry/exclusive_stream_the_burials_death_conquered) ]. And "Reconciliation" at [ [bailsandborns.com/news/the-burial-the-winepress-single-reconciliation](http://bailsandborns.com/news/the-burial-the-winepress-single-reconciliation) ]. Pre-order *The Winepress* now at Facedown Records. [facedown.merchnow.com](http://facedown.merchnow.com)

**As Hell Retreats** has just announced a bevy of autumn tour dates with The Advocate and Gideon. The band is touring in support of their 2010 release *Revival*. The tour launches August 20th in Memphis, TN and ends Spetmeber 18th in Saraland, AL.

As hard rock merchants **X-Sinner** keep rolling on their *World Covered In Blood Tour*, the band has come to find out just what a success their latest album of the same name has been – albeit as a blessing and a curse. Illegal downloading of this album has become extremely frustrating to some of the band members, who have had their share of financial difficulties trying to make a living doing their art. "We've finally got a hugely successful project on our hands, way larger than we anticipated, but we are being robbed of the enjoyment and success of the fruit of our labors" states lead singer/guitar player **Rex Scott**. "It just isn't right" he continues. "It's very frustrating and really hurts. I think I'd rather just write and record songs just to play live versus putting out an album that everybody steals." The band has the Legends Of Rock Festival in Germany Sept 18th and winds up the tour in Puerto Rico on Oct 16th. During the break following the tour the band will be deciding weather or not to release their new material.

**Vengeance Rising**, **Bloodgood**, and **Sacred Warrior** are all set for reissues to be released on Intense Millennium Records in early November.

**In the Midst of Lions** released their Facedown debut *The Heart of Man*. The band is just finishing up their stint on the *Scream the Prayer Tour* supporting the new album. Invision Music states, "In the Midst of Lions have created one of the best death metal albums of 2010 so far." Decoy Music agrees by proclaiming, "Tracks like 'Defiance' give you something to love, like well-done shredding guitar work and a nice solo." You can pick up *The Heart of Man* at: <http://facedown.merchnow.com>

**Lust Control** has been informally asked by a band that is a regular on the Underground Stage if they'd play Cornerstone 2011. The over-zealous frontman, who just sang vocals on that stage with **Sexually Frustrated**, said, "Yes." If the (unofficial as of yet) details work out, we could see the reunited band at next year's fest. Lord help us all.

## THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

### BEING REAL

I had the privilege last week of being at a great Christian blues and gospel concert here in Melbourne, Australia. The Glenn Kaiser Band, Steve Grace and John Smith. In 1984, it was the prayers of my parents and wisdom of a church youth pastor that brought about my turn back towards living for and following Jesus with my whole life.

The youth pastor from the Baptist church I had grown up in asked my parents, "What is Steve interested in? There must be some way to get him back following Jesus?" My mother told the youth pastor, "All Steve is really interested in is heavy rock music." The wise pastor prayed for an answer and then came to our house and gave me a Resurrection Band album – *Colours*. That album turned my life 180 degrees onto the right track – walking a lifetime with faith with and in Jesus!

Glenn Kaiser is of course the frontman for Rez, and these days tours constantly with his Glenn Kaiser Band. He is also one of the founders of Jesus People USA, a community of 600 in Chicago that feed 500 living on the streets each day. Steve Grace is an Australian acoustic gospel singer who spends much of his time ministering to and helping disadvantaged aboriginal communities in

outback Australia. John Smith is the president of God's Squad Christian Biker Ministry, who also reaches out to the disadvantaged and homeless.

This was a concert like no other. John spoke, and then Glenn played some songs. The message and music was real and passionate. Steve Grace played some songs and inspired the crowd once again with words of challenge. Glenn played another set and at one point was speaking about poverty with tearful emotion. John Smith presented a challenging communication of faith, self-sacrifice and what it means to really follow Jesus! How "the church" has missed the basics of feeding the poor, compassion for the disadvantaged and simply living that Ole Gospel Life for Jesus! Steve Grace closed with 3 old hymns played acoustically.

After the show I met with Glenn and we talked about the tribute song I recorded for Rez last year. If it was not for this man, I would not be alive, would not have met my wife, would not have likewise daily endeavored to help and inspire others to the real Christian walk! After hearing more of my health issues, Glenn embraced me tightly. Glenn put his cheek to mine and prayed for me as a tear came from his eyes and ran down my



cheek. This was real! Real is the way we should all live! Read James chapter one! Lest we forget what true religion is! Christianity is never about being cool, but always about being real!

www.graveforsaken.com www.myspace.com/graveforsaken

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## HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE Sampler CD #86

- 01 DISAFFECTION - "Mortuary Man" from the album *Begin the Revolution*
  - 02 THE REX CARROLL BAND - "Circle Of Love" from the album *That Was Then This Is Now*
  - 03 VISION - "Standing On The Rock" from s/t (25th Anniversary Edition)
  - 04 KING JAMES - "Never Is Forever" from the album *The Fall* (Collector's Edition)
  - 05 MYSILENT WAKE - "I Am (Eternity)" from the album *Black Lights & Silent Roads*
  - 06 TITANIC - "Gods Of War" from the album *Maiden Voyage* (Collector's Edition)
  - 07 VISION - "Mountain In The Sky" (single edit) from the album *Mountain In The Sky*
  - 08 JIMMYHOTZ - "From Love Life Did Begin" from the album *Beyond the Crystal Sea*
  - 09 HOLYBLOOD - "Shining Sun" from the album *Shining Sun*
  - 10 MESSIAH - "Final Warning" from the album *Final Warning*
  - 11 DEUS INVICTUS - "Ex Nihilo" from the album *Staged In Awaiting*
  - 12 SAINT - "Ryders" from the album *In the Battle* (Collector's Edition)
  - 13 ADIASTASIA - "Kingdom Of Glory" from the album *Life War* (remixed)
  - 14 DANIEL BAND - "Undercover Christian" from the album *On Rock +2*
  - 15 FINAL AXE - "War Cry" from the album *Beyond Hell's Gate*
  - 16 GRAVE FORSAKEN - "War Is Hell" from the album *Fight to the Death*
  - 17 LIBERTYN JUSTICE - "Do What You Believe" from the album *Light It Up*
- Congratulations to Heaven's Metal for 25 years!*



Retroactive Records has signed classic metal legends **MASS** to re-issue two pieces of Classic Metal History. They will reissue the original self-released 1984 four-song self-titled EP (never before released on CD) with original artwork. The EP sold over 10,000 copies on vinyl in the Boston area alone!

The American metalcore band **Demon Hunter** is headlining the third edition of Brainstorm Festival. Co-headlining are death-metallers In Vain from Norway and power-metal sensation Innerwish from Greece. Brainstorm Festival takes place on 5 and 6 November 2010 in club Gigant in the city Apeldoorn in The Netherlands. Besides concerts the two-day event offers exposition, a CD-market and an alternative program in the theater of the club. Other bands that play this years Brainstorm Festival are **The Spirit That Guides Us**, Officium Triste, **Slechtvalk**, **My Silent Wake**, Dark Sky, **Ryffhunter** (with members of **Seventh Avenue** and **Sinbreed**), In Grief and Erebus. For further information visit: [brainstormfestival.com](http://brainstormfestival.com)

X-fest is now in the process of finalizing plans for the 2010 Festival to be held Labor Day Weekend (September 3rd thru 5th), at the Skamania County Fairgrounds in Stevenson, WA (where Tomfest used to be held). The fest will no doubt feature mostly alternative rock and punk, there are usually some extreme and metal bands that play. "We are in our 7th year and continue to evolve and grow. We exist to bring individuals together from various backgrounds to enjoy three days of God, music, art and worship! We welcome everyone into a community where they matter. We endeavor to provide a safe place for those who have slipped through the cracks of church, family or society. We are artists, musicians, dancers, and writers who love God passionately. Come and join in the fun. We look forward to meeting and getting to know you."

Can you imagine being knighted by the Pope? That is exactly what happened to **Kreyson's Josef Koenek**. He was named knight and received an award from Pope Benedict XVI on June 14th. He graciously accepted the honor on behalf of his family, friends, and colleagues. For video visit: [youtube.com/watch?v=ZoeWsATD6I0](http://youtube.com/watch?v=ZoeWsATD6I0)

**Corpus Christi** has a video for their new song, "Monuments." Visit: [youtube.com/watch?v=P8BKdlg6Jlc](http://youtube.com/watch?v=P8BKdlg6Jlc)

**The Devil Wears Prada** has a custom comic book releasing with its new *Zombie* EP. AOL's Comics Alliance just posted an absolutely awesome preview to the band's upcoming release, *Zombie* EP and the JL Bourne-written (*Day by Day Armageddon*), limited-edition, full-fledged, 14-page comic book called *ZOMBIE, The EP Comic*, that features the band members as five combat soldiers on a perilous, top-secret mission in a world infected by Zombies. *Zombie* EP will be released on August 24 (Ferret Music). *HM* called the EP "powerful, and as catchy as any set of metal riffs can be, with a musical uniqueness that their scene is starving for." *Revolver* cited the new music as "some of their heaviest music yet." Check out the interview at: [comicsalliance.com/2010/08/04/the-devil-wears-prada-mike-branica-zombie-ep-comic/](http://comicsalliance.com/2010/08/04/the-devil-wears-prada-mike-branica-zombie-ep-comic/)

Look for features on **Stairway**, **Audiovision** and a **Demon Hunter / As I Lay Dying / War of Ages** concert review (plus a lot more) in the next *Heaven's Metal* fanzine (I guess we'll call that one our October/November issue!).

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# GRAVE FORSAKEN

## NO KIDDIN' ... I'M READY TO FIGHT!

BY KEVEN CROTHERS

**THE AUSSIE THRASHERS FROM DOWN UNDER CONTINUE TO DELIVER QUALITY METAL AND THEIR MOST RECENT RELEASE *FIGHT TO THE DEATH* IS NO DIFFERENT. COMING A LONG WAY FROM THEIR EARLY INCARNATIONS AS MORTIFICATION CLONES, GRAVE FORSAKEN – OVER THEIR LAST COUPLE OF ALBUMS – SEEMED TO HAVE CARVED OUT A NICHE AND SOUND THAT IS ALL THEIR OWN. OWING MUCH TO THE SOUNDS OF EARLY THRASH METAL ICONS SUCH AS METALLICA, SLAYER, DESTRUCTION, ETC., GRAVE FORSAKEN HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK DILIGENTLY ON THEIR CRAFT. FROM MY OBSERVATIONS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF OTHERS, IT APPEARS *FIGHT TO THE DEATH* IS A SOLID ALBUM OF THRASH WHILE STILL CONTAINING A FEW SURPRISES OF ITS OWN.**

Since it would've been impossible to actually fly to Australia and put it on my expense account (Ha!) I had to discuss the current state of Grave Forsaken with vocalist Vaughn Gregory in a way that would be different (trade secret, guys...).

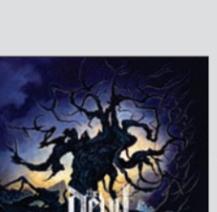
As our conversation commenced, Vaughn and I spoke about the ongoing development of Grave Forsaken: "With each successive album, we have done our utmost to critically assess what was good and bad about the album. We have then made adjustments based on what we thought were the weaknesses. So, after *River*, we decided we needed more lead guitar, then after *Destined* we realized we needed to up the tempo in places."

Vaughn continued, "After *This Day Forth* we decided that the production needed to be cleaner." After a moment of reflection he continued with his thought: "Each album has its weaknesses that we have attempted to improve upon. The songwriting has always been fairly natural, but I'm told that it is improving as well. I think that just comes with experience, and knowing better what will work and won't work. We've never really made a conscious effort to sound a particular way; it's more a natural progression. This new one

has definitely come out with a distinctive thrash edge, which I'm very pleased with." Any listener who has followed Grave Forsaken will notice that same development.

The conversation at this point focused more on their most recent album *Fight to the Death*. With improved guitar playing and the best vocal performance of Vaughn's career, undoubtedly this release is one that has firmly placed Grave Forsaken on the metal map. Yet these changes and developments did come with a price that Vaughn expanded upon.

"*Fight to the Death* was the most difficult album yet, to tell the truth. We parted company with Dave midway through the recording, so that created some awkwardness finishing the album. In many ways it was quite a disjointed recording, as we developed a lot of the material in the studio over the course of nearly a year. Elias had written most of the riffs, but they were pieced together during the recording process. Previously we've had all the songs written and arranged before going in to record."

 <p>86 August Burns Red <i>Messengers</i>   Solid State   2007</p> <p>"One of our best reviewers at HM, David Stagg, called this the best metal album of the year in '07 and states it's still the best since. As a sophomore release it elevated their game to take-notice-of-this levels." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>87 Nodes of Ranvier <i>Nodes of Ranvier</i>   Facedown   2003</p> <p>"These lads somehow put South Dakota on the metal map. Ya gotta be good to do that. I think muscle-y heavy hardcore meets metal riffage and really angry vocals." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>88 Holy Blood <i>Waves Are Dancing</i>   Musica   2004</p> <p>"One of the most interesting and diverse albums on the list, this Ukraine band perfectly meld folk music and black metal." —Chris Beck</p>
 <p>89 A Plea For Purging <i>Depravity</i>   Facedown   2009</p> <p>"With enough downtuned/distorted, heavy riffage and percussion to make any metal fan scream for joy, Plea offers up one of the genre's less generic/more engaging metalcore platters in recent years." —Doc</p>	 <p>90 Fourth Estate <i>Finesse and Fury</i>   Rubicon   1992</p> <p>"Mind-blowing instrumentation. The first time ever in music history that the revolutionary TransPerformance Automatic Self-Tuning Guitar Technology was employed in a recorded format. Joy is a timeless piece." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>91 Grave Robber <i>Be Afraid</i>   Retroactive   2008</p> <p>"One of the most original concepts in hard rock and from a Christian point of view! Whether it's 'Rigor Mortis' or 'I Zombie!' We are all members of the Living Dead aren't we? The best is yet to come." —Keven Crothers</p>
 <p>92 Disciple <i>Disciple</i>   SRE/Epic   2005</p> <p>"The first album that this former power trio added a fourth member and ventured outside the more traditional metal format. The experiment worked... and propelled the band to a wider audience without losing its edge." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>93 Oh, Sleeper <i>Son of the Morning</i>   Solid State   2010</p> <p>"Part of the new face of Christian metal, Oh Sleeper's 2nd album displays maturity over their metalcore peers and gives us a new symbol—the emasculated pentagram—to scare all the mothers with. Let the devil bashing begin." —Chris Gatto</p>	 <p>94 King James <i>The Fall</i>   Viva   1997</p> <p>"While the 1st album from Whitecross/Stryper/Sacred Fire albums was an over-produced commercial flop, the second album (exit Stryper boys) shows a dark and hungry Alice in Chains side that'll completely surprise you. I always wondered why album #3 never followed after this Zeitgeist of the late 90's bit the nail on its head. Re-release is coming!" —Chris Gatto</p>
 <p>95 The Brave <i>Battle Cries</i>   Pakaderm   1992</p> <p>"The big arena rock sound—coupled with catchy, singable songs—was the key to The Brave's success with this release." —Doc</p>	 <p>96 The Devil Wears Prada <i>With Roots Above and Branches Below</i>   Ferret   2009</p> <p>"All the elements of their sound came together on this one and it was less 'pretty boy' vocals and more hardcore. Definitely their most attention-getting release... thus far." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>97 Atomic Opera <i>For Madmen Only</i>   Giant   1994</p> <p>"Replete with heavy, groove-laden tunes, this was Frank Hart's strongest release with the band. Filled with clever and thought-provoking lyrics, artful metal never sounded so good." —Doc</p>
 <p>98 Underoath <i>Cries of the Past</i>   Takehold   2000</p> <p>"Ever hear someone refer to a period in this band's career as 'the metal Underoath'?" This is that era right here." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>99 Flyleaf <i>Flyleaf</i>   Octone   2005</p> <p>"Like half of the albums on this list, this one could easily be top-ten for historical impact and popularity. The frontwoman for this band proves once and for all that girls can rock (as if we doubted that)." —Doug Van Pelt</p>	 <p>100 Rez <i>Silence Screams</i>   Grrr   1988</p> <p>"Light/Light" is a terrific rock anthem that harkens back to the band's first album, while still embodying the energy and spark that this new incarnation of the band had. This album kicked a hot band into high gear again." —Doug Van Pelt</p>



71 Cage  
*Hell Destroyer* | DA | 2007

"Hands down, one of the best modern power metal bands from the U.S. Sean Peck's powerful screams will take you for a ride through a Revelations-based concept album with Cage's unique brand of speed/power. Not a Christian band per se, but see if 'The Christhammer' doesn't get your fist and blood pumping."—Chris Gatto



72 Saviour Machine  
*Intense* | 1993

"One of the most lyrically controversial releases in the Intense Records fold, their debut was, nevertheless, an amazing accomplishment by Eric Clayton and company. Their gothic-tinged, progressive metal was quite unique to the scene when this was released in '93. 'Killer' remains one of the most epic songs in the Christian metal archives."—Doc



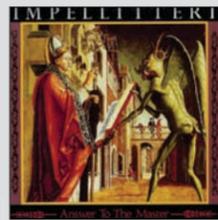
73 Living Sacrifice  
*Conceived in Fire* | Solid State | 2002

"The kings of Christ-centric death metal with a Sepultura vibe originally went out on an extremely positive note with this highly percussive and lyrically convicting release."—Doc



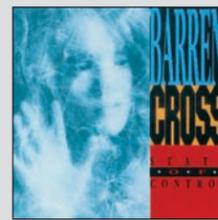
74 Aletheian  
*Dying Vine* | Hope Prevails | 2005

"Imagine the perfect mix of the frenetic intensity of early Extol with the progressive dynamics of Becoming the Archetype and you have a great picture of the soundscape here—blistering metal with intelligent and exhortational lyrics."—Doc



75 Impellitteri  
*Answer to the Master* | Victor/RCA | 1994

"Essential melodic metal in the purest sense... no prog here. When this was released in '94 it set the standard for a genre of metal trying to survive the alternative/grunge movement."—Doc



76 Barren Cross  
*State of Control* | Enigma | 1989

"Though many people don't prefer the Elefante-ization of Barren Cross, *State of Control* actually contains some of the band's best and heaviest tracks in 'Out of Time,' 'Stage of Intensity' and the album's title track."—Chris Beck



77 As I Lay Dying  
*Frail Words Collapse* | Metal Blade | 2003

"The album that put them on the map as a real contender in the metalcore scene. They have since blown that door open even further, but here is where it all started, still a high mark in their career."—Jeff McCormack



78 Harmony  
*Chapter II: Afterlife* | Ulterior | 2008

"Amazing melodic metal that hopefully foreshadows other great releases and higher rankings in the next 'all-time' list."—Chris Beck



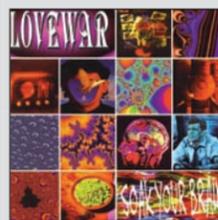
79 A Hill To Die Upon  
*Infinite Titanic Immortal* | Bombworks | 2009

"Many (if not most) death metal CDs, upon the first few listens, pummel you with brutality & speed, but not much else. In fact, often there are very few dynamic shifts to keep things interesting or even listenable. *Immortal* is not one of those. Memorable riffs, brutal structures, mesmerizing melodies—all of this & more cause my finger to go for the repeat button!"—Lloyd Harp



80 Theocracy  
*Theocracy* | Metal Ages | 2003

"The debut was written and recorded by one man (Matt Smith)... and not a bad song on the entire disc. Not only did this release gain Matt a lot of notoriety in the small Christian power/prog scene, but the much larger secular prog/power scene embraced this as well."—Doc



81 Lovewar  
*Soak Your Brain* | Pakaderm | 1993

"King's X meets Extreme, which equals greatness."—Doug Van Pelt



82 Darkwater  
*Calling the Earth to Witness* | Ulterior | 2007

"Delivering what could be argued as Ulterior Records' first world-class release, these Harmony band mates plus one—treading heavily in Dream Theater waters—forged a wonderfully vibrant and refreshing progressive metal treasure."—Doc



83 Embodiment  
*Embrace the Eternal* | Solid State | 1998

"Heavy, heavy, heavy..."—Lloyd Harp



84 Neal Morse  
*Soa Scriptura* | Radiant/Metal Blade | 2007

"A prog rock-opera done right, this concept album about issues surrounding Martin Luther tells a story set to some of the most amazing musicianship. None of that psychedelic dreamy prog rock feel here, this is a masterpiece in high intensity music and orchestration."—Jeff McCormack



85 Virgin Black  
*Elegant and Dying* | The End | 2003

"Epic, doomy, gothic, symphonic, haunting. While all of their releases are engaging, *Elegant... best showcases the dark and passionate catharsis of these talented Australians.*"—Doc



Taking a moment to clear his throat, he went on, "Although it was challenging, that's not to say it wasn't a great time. For the most part we enjoyed ourselves; it was just that it was quite drawn out. The upside is it gave us a chance to develop the vocal patterns and solos, meaning a lot of stuff was added over the course of the recording. It really was built from the ground up."

After I pointed out my excitement about the stronger vocal performance in comparison to their previous albums, Vaughn, with an obviously large grin on his face, expanded on that topic: "Yes, I'm glad you spotted that! I really only found my voice during the latter part of recording *This Day Forth*. I was pretty happy with my vocals on a few of the tracks from that album. Having realized what worked for me, I made the decision to go for it 100% on this album."

"I gave every vocal line everything I had. It meant that I could only do one or two songs in any given vocal recording session, as I just went for it full bore. Some of the vocals are done with such intensity that I would finish a session with dizziness and headaches. Because of the way we developed the album, I literally had months to nail my vocal delivery in most songs. I would sing to a rough instrumental mix in the car. When I stopped at lights, people would see me just hammering out these vocals in preparation for recording. By the time I recorded them, I knew them forwards, backwards and sideways! I think that preparation really shows in the final product." To my ears, that rehearsal and development is immediately evident when you compare this release to their others.

Of particular interest to me was how the change in personal has affected the band. Many times things get difficult just due to personality types or changes within the lives of the band members themselves. As I posed this question to him, Vaughn really pondered this before he answered.

"Y'know, we started with Tim Steadman on drums in 2004. He was a very loyal band member, but was fairly new to the drums when he joined. The band became friends with Dave Kilgallon from Scourged Flesh, and in 2007 the suggestion was made that Tim switch to vocals so Dave could join on drums. At the time I was doing vocals and guitar, so I dropped the vocals and focused on guitar." Vaughn continued, "That configuration lasted until mid 2008, when Tim left amicably due to increased family commitments. It was only natural that I would slot back in on vocals. We befriended Simon Hoggett during 2007, and in early 2009 he joined on guitar, freeing me up to focus on being the front man. Dave left in mid 2009 due mainly to family ties, and we replaced him with Richard Sallows. Then late last year, I felt it wasn't quite gelling with Simon, so I requested that he step aside. So we're back to a 4 piece with only Elias on guitar now."

"I've always been more about the dynamic within in the band than the actual musical output. Each member departing has been really difficult. When you're in a band, you're so close that it makes severing ties painful. The truth is, and I've always been upfront about this, parting with Dave and Simon last year was not smooth. We went through some tough times as a result. However, all of us have made every effort to remain on good terms with each other and we are still friends."

the band did lose its way somewhat during the departures, but that is no one's fault. It was more of a side effect of the disharmony we were experiencing. Because we are in a spiritual battle, we have pretty much realized that there's always something attacking us, be it an internal grievance or external criticism. Currently we have a Bible study prior to every rehearsal and are spiritually in as good a place as we have been for a while. As the album says, we are in a fight to the death."

Of lasting interest to me is how do men with families handle the pressure? Many times we hear of the casualties of being away from the family as I posed this question to Vaughn he gave a very thoughtful response.

"The challenge on family is immense. Our wives are very understanding, and they never stand in the way of us gigging or recording. It often seems like a futile undertaking, but we are driven by a strong calling to persevere regardless. I've often said that if weren't doing this for God, the toll on our family and work life would be far too great a price to pay. I can't tell you the amount of times we've gone to work on 3 hours sleep after a midweek gig at midnight. However, I don't want to sound like I'm complaining, because we love what we do, and we are blessed God has allowed us to do it."

Vaughn and I also discussed the opportunities they've had to share their music in a live setting, "Our main type of gig is in the Perth underground rock and metal scene. Very often these gigs are attended by fewer than 50 people, so you certainly wouldn't want to be in it for the adulation. We also played at Easterfest recently, which was a great experience. Other bands at the festival included Rezer, Disciple and As I Lay Dying. It was a great event to be involved with."

"We always play with non-Christian bands here in Western Australia. It would be quite unusual for us to play with another Christian band, because there are hardly any over here. We have actually played lots of gigs with black metal and death metal bands, even though we aren't as heavy as them. Some of these bands have a strong anti-Christian message, so sharing the stage has been intimidating at times. Especially when you know some of them have been critical of us behind the scenes. The thing is, we are always polite and do our best to engage with them on a personal level."

"We are known in the scene as a Christian band, so we kind of carry that with us whenever we arrive at a venue. Most people are really cool towards us, but we do occasionally get hecklers, or people walking out. We just try to let the onstage performance speak for itself, and of late most of the feedback has been that we put on a really good show, and it really didn't matter that we are a Christian band. That has been a nice development in recent times. Like I've said all along, all we can do is give 100% for Christ in everything we do. The Holy Spirit takes care of the rest."

In closing Vaughn had this to say, "Thanks so much for the interview. I've been collecting Heaven's Metal since the early 90's and doing this interview means a lot to me on a personal level." Right On.

"Spiritually it is always a struggle and no one is perfect. None of us can point the finger and say this lineup is better than that lineup or whatnot. It is true that the prayer life of



# SINBREED

FROM GERMANY, WITH THE LOVE

BY CHRIS GATTO



**G**ERMANY. HOMELAND OF OKTOBERFEST, SOCCER, AND LEGENDARY HEAVY METAL

BANDS LIKE ACCEPT AND SCORPIONS. ADD TO THAT GROWING LIST A GREAT NEW POWER METAL BAND FORMED AROUND GUITARIST FLO LAUREN. THE BAND IS ROUNDED OUT BY VOCALIST HERBIE LANGHANS (SEVENTH AVENUE), DRUMMER FREDERIK EHMKE (BLIND GUARDIAN), AND BASSIST ALEXANDER SCHULZ. THIS SUPER GROUP OF METAL MUSICIANS JUST RELEASED THEIR DEBUT, *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE*, ON ULTERIUM RECORDS AND IT'S AVAILABLE NOW WORLDWIDE. CHECK OUT OUR DISCUSSION WITH BAND FOUNDER FLO AND SINGER HERBIE, WHO IS NO STRANGER TO *HEAVEN'S METAL*.



56 Sympathy  
*Anagogic Tyranny* | Bombworks | 2008

"Excellent blend of early Mortification, Extol and Believer, these crushingly fast and furious songs – replete with heady lyrics – are a veritable feast for fans of extreme metal." —Doc



57 Undercover  
*Balance of Power* | Broken | 1990

"Best metal album by a non-metal band – period. The untimely death of the guitarist's wife left the band to create this dark ball of raw emotion, deeply moving, and so far from any of Undercover's other albums." —Chris Gatto



58 Deliverance  
*Learn* | Intense | 1993

"The big D's answer to Metallica's black album, these songs were – and are to this day – stinking heavy. Accompanied by some of Jimmy's best lyrics ever, to boot." —Doc



59 Kekal  
*The Painful Experience* | Clenched Fist | 2001

"This Indonesian band's early work was primitive black metal. TPE took the barsness of black metal, but infused it with lots of melodies and some progressive sensibilities. It hinted at the ground their later work would traverse, but TPE is perhaps the most successful of their fusion of progressive metal and extreme black metal." —Loyal Harp



60 Slechtvalk  
*At the Dawn of War* | Fear Dark | 2005

"The brutality and creativity of Slechtvalk's music on this album prove that the term 'Christian Viking metal' should not be an oxymoron." —Chris Beck



61 Magdallan  
*Big Bang* | Intense | 1992

"Mix the vocal harmonies of Queen and the Beach Boys at their best and add lots of guitar flash and power melodic rock and you've got a gem – at least 5 great songs." —Doug Van Pelt



62 Narnia  
*Course of a Generation* | MCM/Nightmare | 2009

"Changing singers tends to hurt bands quite often, but in this case it set a new high standard for this amazing, already well-established power metal band. Sounds like a totally different band." —Jeff McCormack



63 Alice Cooper  
*Brutal Planet* | Spitfire | 2000

"Alice's second 'Christian' album shows the world's dark side with probably the most brutal music released by him to date. A true heavy metal slab of shock rock glory." —Jeff McCormack



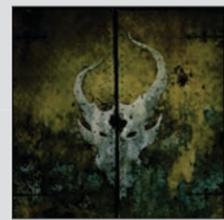
64 Jerusalem  
*Warrior* | Lamb & Lion | 1982

"The song 'Sodom' is an all-time epic, classic and show-stopping tune. Then there's 'Man of This World.' Pioneering hard rock slightly in the vein of Thin Lizzy." —Doug Van Pelt



65 Leviticus  
*Setting Fire to the Earth* | Royal | 1987

"A huge step forward for an already amazing band. The new vocalist made a total change in sound, and the phenomenal bass playing took the band to new levels in melodic metal. With lyrics often right from the Scripture, this gem is amazing." —Jeff McCormack



66 Demon Hunter  
*Storm the Gates of Hell* | Solid State | 2007

"They do what they do – and they took it to amazingly new heights this time around by combining some of their most brutal tunes with high doses of heavy, yet melodious vocal styling. The great production brings out the power like never before." —Jeff McCormack



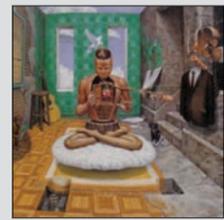
67 Saint  
*Times End* | Pure Metal | 1986

"The earliest Christian metal bands were of the hard rock variety, until Saint changed that with this dark apocalyptic vision of the future. By showing that Christian bands could play as hard as Priest and have imaginative lyrics they opened the door for more extreme bands to follow. Yeah, some of us fought hard and lost to see Times End higher on the list, but it's a landmark nonetheless." —Chris Gatto



68 Jet Circus  
*Step On It* | Wonderland | 1990

"Terry Haw and Ez Gomer mixed dance rhythms with hard rock riffs to create a new and infectious hybrid. Not too unlike the sound (and creativity) of Faith No More." —Doug Van Pelt



69 P.O.D.  
*The Fundamental Elements of Southtown* | Atlantic | 1999

"This breakthrough release was huge. Their streetwise hardcore/bip-hop/reggae-infused agro metal nicely transcended stereotypes and powerfully paved the way for the monumental and timely Satellite." —Doc



70 Mortification  
*Post-Momentary Affliction* | Nuclear Blast | 1993

"Is there a better song than 'Grind Planetarium' to exemplify the Mortification death metal sound? More diverse and progressive than Scrolls, this release represents the pinnacle of the band's early years." —Doc



"Lance King's best singing performance also features some of the best production ever heard. The song 'Shelter Me' should have been a huge hit."  
—Chris Beck

41 Balance of Power  
*Perfect Balance* | Massacre/Nightmare | 2001



"Conceptually based on the life of Christ, this epic masterpiece – influenced by doom giants My Dying Bride, Cathedral – featured operatic elements alongside heavy, plodding guitar riffs. With its release, the Aussie trio of Andrew Tompkins, Jason De Ron and Jayson Sherlock essentially delivered the most powerful and moving death/doom recording in the history of Christian metal." —Doc

42 Paramaecium  
*Exhumed of the Earth* | R.E.X. | 1994



"From the band that inverted the inverted cross, this release defied the rules and brought the 'Light of the World' to the black metal scene. It should be no surprise to see two of Jayson Sherlock's post Mortification releases back-to-back on this list." —Doc

43 Horde  
*Hellig Usvart* | Nuclear Blast | 1994



"David Zaffiro produced hard rock/metal with superior hooks and a great rock 'n' roll album. 'Who Pulls the Strings?' ... Domination of Christian Rock Radio was imminent."  
—Keven Crothers

44 Zion  
*Thunder From the Mountain* | Image | 1989



"The follow up to Human Sacrifice was heavier and more brutal. Just take one listen to 'Into The Abyss' or 'Herod's Violent Death.' If you want nice melodies look elsewhere."  
—Keven Crothers

45 Vengeance Rising  
*Once Dead* | Intense | 1990



"For an 80's band making a comeback, they hit the mark big time! Saint proves with this release that it is not only wine and cheese that get much better with age."  
—Jeff McCormack

46 Saint  
*Hell Blade* | Retroactive | 2010



"I can't think of a finer collection of melodic metal songs, track-for-track. Dieter Dierks (Scorpions fame) produced this act in hopes of birthing the next great band."  
—Doug Van Pelt

47 Joshua  
*Intense Defense* | RCA | 1988



"Just seeing the video on MTV's Heavy Metal Mania, should remind us all that 1985 was the continued infestation of the Yellow and Black Attack. The title track, 'Surrender,' 'The Rock that Makes Me Roll' – HEAVY ... 'Together as One' not so much. Still, a classic album, bar none." —Keven Crothers

48 Stryper  
*Soldiers Under Command* | Enigma | 1985



"Sounding exactly like a cross between Narnia and progressive death metal, this is the best album from Christian Rivel's best band."  
—Chris Beck

49 Divinefire  
*Into A New Dimension* | Rivel | 2006



"An amalgamation of the best pieces from their previous two amazing releases, this album has all of the heaviness while maintaining a palatable melodious side. Powerful!"  
—Jeff McCormack

50 The Showdown  
*Back Breaker* | Solid State | 2008



"British thrash classic that wedded speed metal with the gloom and doom that all Ian Arkley's later bands would flesh out. Brilliant and overlooked. Who could forget songs like 'Dr. Hatchet?'"  
—Chris Gatto

51 Seventh Angel  
*The Torment* | Edge | 1990



"Well-produced symphonic black metal that rivals the best any other band (Christian or secular) in this subgenre can offer."  
—Chris Beck

52 Crimson Moonlight  
*The Covenant Progress* | Rivel | 2003



"Many seemed to pass over this release labeling it as a Halloween copy, but that should be a plus in my book. High energy melodic power metal done well, this band should have gone on to greatness with future releases."  
—Jeff McCormack

53 Recon  
*Behind Enemy Lines* | Intense | 1989



"Probably the best output so far from this Scandinavian death metal band. From the allegorical lyrics to the speedy and powerful riffing, this band exudes excellence."  
—Doc

54 Immortal Souls  
*Wintereich* | Dark Balance/Facedown | 2007



"Rob Rock on vocals and Dennis Cameron on guitars made for a fantastic album."  
—Chris Beck

55 Angelica  
*Angelica* | Intense | 1989

**Chris Gatto: Congratulations, Flo, on putting together what I'm sure will be the best new band of 2010!**

Flo: Thanks Chris, cool to hear that. I hope you will be right at the end of the year, ha ha. We consider ourselves a band, with the obvious restriction that Herbie and Frederik's main bands have priority.

**What are your goals for Sinbreed and will the band be a full time deal or a side project?**

At this point of time, just a few weeks after the release, we are waiting to see how the album will be received. Nevertheless, we are hot to release many more albums and hopefully we'll get put in this position if the album does well.

**Please describe for me your musical journey, or how you came to put Sinbreed together. Also, how did Frederik and Herbie come to be involved?**

I started Sinbreed 10 years ago after I saw Herbie's band Seventh Avenue playing a festival. It was clear to me then that I wanted to work with Herbie since his voice was exactly what I was looking for. I needed a drummer who had the technical abilities to play the things I was thinking of, and Frederik, who is well known for his playing skills in the local scene of my hometown (we live in the same city), fit the bill perfectly. His gig with Blind Guardian came later. After the first rehearsals with Herbie and Frederik, which turned out very cool right away, we soon agreed to get this record out quickly.

**Blind Guardian and Seventh Avenue have an obvious influence on the band (of course!), as well as Grave Digger and Running Wild, but there is also a melodic undercurrent, not unlike Masterplan. Was there a conscious effort to make the power metal more melodic?**

I disagree in seeing obvious Blind Guardian or Seventh Avenue influences. Of course you are right, there is power metal in all three bands. But besides this, there is so much more nowadays in a band's song structures. The world doesn't need another clone of those bands. Sinbreed to me delivers straight power metal tunes, basic song structures, tight musicianship, and songs with a focus. When talking about the melodic quota, it came naturally having such parts on the record. Nevertheless, Sinbreed, in my opinion, has an essential aggressiveness which separates us from many standard Euro-melodic metal bands.

**Why is it that the Germans have dominated the power metal and thrash metal genres for decades? (I have a theory that it is the great German beers that make this so!)**

(he laughs) Could be the beer (yet I prefer Czech beer), but honestly, I don't know. When thinking of thrash, I sure see lots of countries coming up with great bands – both in the past and today, but when thinking of power metal, for me there is only Germany, ha ha. Hopefully Sinbreed will be part of this legacy one day.

**It seems obvious that *When Worlds Collide* is a spiritual album. What are you as the songwriter trying to say with this album?**

It depends. If I have learned one thing in my life so far, it's the fact that people should be free to choose. Sinbreed's lyrics are all about finding a personal interpretation of what's the key to life, what's good, what's evil. What this key is may differ widely from person to person. It may differ in faith. All I say is that I believe it's worth thinking about life instead of living it day by day – without having a personal master plan.

**Fair enough. Thank you, Flo, for your time and best of luck with Sinbreed. Keep up the good work!**

Thank you Chris, it was my pleasure.

**Herbie, I send greetings from all the Christian metal fans in the USA! Please tell me that Sinbreed will not mean the end of Seventh Avenue! How involved will you be with Sinbreed?**

Herbie: Oh no – it's not the end of Seventh Avenue! But Sinbreed has more character than only a project! The last few years, I've been involved in a lot of projects, but I think Sinbreed is more than only a project. Let's see what the future will bring!

**Congratulations on your work with the new band. It is definitely some of your best vocals. How long have you been in music and with what bands?**

Thanks, I also like the Sinbreed album and I am also very happy with the vocals! I've been in music now for 21 years! I started with the Preachers, which became SEVENTH AVENUE. Then I sang backing and guest vocals for a lot of bands like Rhapsody, Kamelot, Aina, Luca Turilli ... and a lot more. I also produce in my studio, and create for fun an 80's cover rock show, and I also sing in other bands. So at the moment, it's a lot of singing!

**Is it important for a band's message to match your heart for you to be involved as a singer?**

I don't sing only in Christian bands, but I must have a good feeling to sing the lyrics. I have no desire to sing lyrics if they have really bad messages.

**How do you measure success as a musician (especially in current times with CD sales slumping)?**

It's really hard in these times. A lot of fans download albums, because it's too cheap and convenient! But I don't know how it will go on. I think if it's the band's time, success will come! Perhaps success is seeing the eyes of the fans maybe in Brazil – we didn't earn any money in these countries, but the power of the fans is the best success ever, I think!

**Danke, Herbie. Best of luck in the metal music and God's blessings on you. Thanks for talking with us.**

Thanks and ROCK ON!!!



# RESURRECTION BAND

## TRANSCENDING GENRES: A TRIBUTE TO REZ

BY KEVEN CROTHERS



Is the Resurrection Band a metal band? To that question I answer, "Does it really matter?" Many will say "They're not metal at all as they are far too mainstream. As a matter of fact they're simply hard rock at most." Our own *Heaven's Metal* crew was unable to reach a consensus on a specific disc. Fair enough. It came to our illustrious publisher to make an executive decision to get them in this list. It would've been a travesty if they hadn't. Perhaps their art doesn't deserve to be in this particular list; maybe it doesn't quite fit. However, in 1978, when their debut release for Star Song Records, *Awaiting Your Reply*, came out, I'm sure there wouldn't have been any doubt. Many Christian bookstores sold it behind the counter; like a forbidden experience, you had to ask for it. How much more metal is that?

None of that mattered to me when I saw them for the first time on their *Live Bootleg* tour of 1984 (second concert I ever attended). It sure seemed like metal to me. I had only a meager exposure to their catalog at that point, primarily from their *Colours* album from 1980. I remember hearing "Colours," "Amazing," and "City Streets" from that album. Obviously, they played lots of other songs, including their trademark "Military Man," yet I was unaware at the time. A raucous event it was, with some fans showing up in full leather and biker denim. This was a very different crowd from the Petra crowd I'd seen six weeks earlier. More intense, more "street," not the typical Christian crowd. I always thought it funny when Guns N' Roses claimed to be from the "street." The streets of Southern California were a far cry from the streets of inner city Chicago.

With Glenn Kaiser and company you got the real deal; there were no pretenses and there were no attitudes, just real people who loved Jesus and played their hearts out. The albums continued to get technically better, both from a production standpoint and playing standpoint. Those first two Star Song releases, the aforementioned *Awaiting Your Reply* and the follow up *Rainbows End*, captured an essence of 1970's hard rock/metal from the production end to the style of song writing.

1980 brought a new label in Light Records, but also a newer, almost rawer sound. *Colours*, *Mommy Don't Love Daddy Anymore* and the *D.M.Z.* albums contained some very good metal/hard rock compositions: "American Dream," "N.Y.C.," "Alienated," "The Chair," "Stark/Spare," "Amazing," "Babylon" and their most enduring song from this period "Military Man." However, there was some confusion as well, because even though there were many harder edged songs, some pop rock type stuff seemed to arrive as well. "Can't Stop Loving You," "I Need Your Love" and several others ... so for a fan like me, who grew up on a diet of AC/DC or Judas Priest, what was I to do with a song like "Elevator Muzik?"

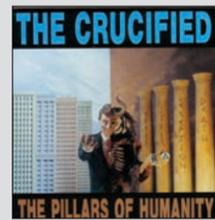
When *Live Bootleg* came out in 1984 on Sparrow Records, Rez again entered new territory with even better production, but more importantly, better songs. With the studio releases of *Hostage* and *Between Heaven 'N Hell*, they still flirted with some poppy new wave type stuff, but they also wrote some fantastic driving melodies. From the haunting "Tears in the Rain" or the commanding "Attention" off of *Hostage* to the AC/DC like "Love Comes Down" and sorrowful "Shadows," off of *Between Heaven 'N Hell*, the heavier side of this band continued to grow.

Throughout their history they'd always had some association with the blues, all the time widening their musical scope to try to win as many folks as possible. I remember Glenn Kaiser speaking about how nearly a third of the Psalms were ones



26 As I Lay Dying  
*An Ocean Between Us* | Metal Blade | 2007

"Third time was the charm for these guys as they moved away from the crowded metalcore scene with huge crushing metal riffs and a more credible sound. 'Nothing Left' is hands down one of the best metal songs of the decade."  
—Doc



27 The Crucified  
*Pillars of Humanity* | Ocean | 1991

"The perfect marriage of hardcore and metal, this release was hugely influential for many young musicians in the scene. The brilliance and intensity was exemplified by 'Mindbender,' which continues to do just that almost 20 years later."  
—Doc



28 Guardian  
*Fire and Love* | Pakadern | 1990

"Miracle Mile worked everyone with its sheen and polish, but this album had the songs. 'Forever and a Day,' 'Time and Time Again' and even the token ballad 'Never Gonna Say Goodbye' are classics."  
—Doug Van Pelt



29 Zao  
*Where Blood and Fire Bring Rest* | Solid State | 1998

"The birth of metalcore: for good or for ill, it all started right here."  
—Lloyd Harp



30 Becoming the Archetype  
*Dichotomy* | Solid State | 2008

Genre-defining progressive death metal, this is, without a doubt, one of the scene's most innovative and powerful releases and it was produced by none other than metal genius Devin Townsend. While all three of their releases are brilliant, diverse and captivating, this one is their best so far. We're forecasting that these guys will be huge."  
—Doc



31 Maylene and the Sons of Disaster  
*III* | Ferret | 2009

"Southern rock/metal hybrid with tons of wit and attitude. While all of their releases have been consistently great, III features their most memorable songs to date."  
—Doc



32 Galactic Cowboys  
*Space in Your Face* | Geffen | 1993

"While not as commercially appealing as the debut, these songs nevertheless ruled. Infectious lyrics delivered via clean, harmonized vocals backed by huge, powerful and crunchy riffs equaled progressive metal brilliance. The monster riffs and rousing lyrics to 'If I Were A Killer' are simply obliterating."  
—Doc



33 Believer  
*Extraction From Mortality* | R.E.X. | 1989

"Although Vengeance was at the top of my list, this is the classic thrash CD I am most likely to pull out and listen to ... still to this day."  
—Lloyd Harp



34 X-Sinner  
*Get It* | Pakadern | 1989

"Blues-drenched, working class metal that stands up tall next to AC/DC or Accept. This album is burned into my memory of the summer of 1989."  
—Chris Gatto



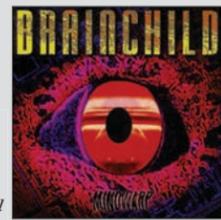
35 Project 86  
*Drawing Black Lines* | BEC/Atlantic | 2000

"Moving into a more metallic musical direction, the P86 boys continued to evoke their sound. Full of high energy musical masterpieces, with some of the more noteworthy lyrical content in the scene, this release became a high-water mark for others to compete with."  
—Jeff McCormack



36 Rage of Angels  
*Rage of Angels* | Regency | 1989

"An unfortunately overlooked, yet amazing melodic power metal release. Amazing musicianship from a band featuring members who later went on to become part of the popular band Steelheart."  
—Jeff McCormack  
"Christian metal's answer to Motley Crue, this album has the attitude and hooks that all albums should."  
—Chris Beck



37 Brainchild  
*Mindwarp* | R.E.X. | 1994

"Without a doubt, this is one of the coolest techno/industrial hybrid metal releases ever. Paradoxically, it was the relative presence of a song structure and memorable groove that really distinguished this release from other noisier entries within the genre."  
—Doc



38 Veni Domine  
*Fall Babylon Fall* | Massacre | 1992

"In the immortal words of Doug Van Pelt, 'This band shreds!'"  
—Doc



39 Sacred Warrior  
*Rebellion* | Intense | 1988

"Highly purported within our karew to be the best Sacred Warrior release, *Rebellion* fell to this lower position when we conceded to our editor's insistence that Obsessions was superior, but we stubbornly refused to let it fall from the list!"  
—Doc



40 Antestor  
*Return of the Black Death* | Cacophonous | 1998

"Devastatingly dark, ROTBD set the standard for Christian black metal."  
—Chris Beck



11 Barren Cross  
*Atomic Arena* | Enigma | 1988

"Taking the Maiden-esque sound to new heights on their second release, the band soared with high energy and hard-biting social commentary."  
—Jeff McCormack



12 Galactic Cowboys  
*Galactic Cowboys* | Geffen | 1988

"Although we had a tough debate over which of the band's first two releases was superior, there was no denying the greatness and inventiveness of this release. And yes, 'at the end of the day,' the majority of us conceded to our editor's preference."  
—Doc



13 Extol  
*Burial* | Solid State | 1998

"Revolutionary. This release may have single-handedly been responsible for the revival of Christ-centered extreme metal."  
—Lloyd Harp



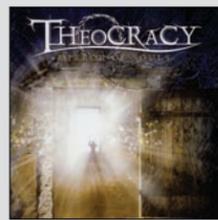
14 Impellitteri  
*Screaming Symphony* | Victor/RCA | 1996

"A band that should be huge offered some of the fastest shredding riffs layered with the powerful golden-throat vocals of Rob Rock. Does melodic metal get any better than this?"  
—Jeff McCormack  
"Christian metal's best melodic metal of all time!"  
—Chris Beck



15 Holy Soldier  
*Holy Soldier* | Myth | 1990

"Great musicianship and a slightly different take on the 'hair band' style. Mature songwriting and deeper lyrical content set this album apart."  
—Kevin Crothers  
"These guys spent years touring the West Coast before recording their debut and it shows. Near flawless pop metal that has aged better than most of the cheese of yesteryear. Haunting melodic vocals, intelligent lyrics, and muscular axe and skin work make Holy Soldier still relevant."  
—Chris Gatto



16 Theocracy  
*Mirror of Souls* | Ulterior/Nightmare | 2008

"Reflecting significant maturity from their already-great first album, *Theocracy* defines excellence in current Christian metal."  
—Chris Beck



17 Mortification  
*Scrolls of the Megaloth* | Intense | 1992

"Though the band's been living it down ever since, this album raised the standard of Christian grindcore to almost unattainable levels."  
—Doug Van Pelt



18 Payable On Death  
*Satellite* | Atlantic | 2001

"The band's greatness and power gelled on this release, mixing melody with punch. 'Boom,' 'Alive' and 'Youth of a Nation' kill."  
—Doug Van Pelt



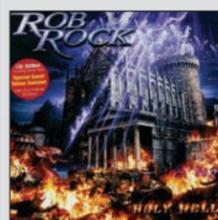
19 Demon Hunter  
*Summer of Darkness* | Solid State | 2004

"The band proved they had staying power with this sophomore album. 'My Heartstrings Come Undone' introduced an original and melodic sound to the scene."  
—Doug Van Pelt



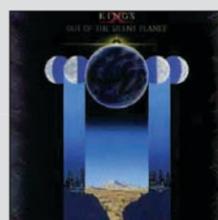
20 Precious Death  
*Southpaw* | Metro One | 1993

"Imagine Living Colour and Metallica jamming in the studio ... with Cber on lead vocals?! Wow! Originality. Progressiveness. Power."  
—Doug Van Pelt



21 Rob Rock  
*Holy Hell* | AFM | 2005

"The finest moment from one of the great vocalists in the metal genre. Heavy and dark, this album is like an M1 Abrams tank on a mission."  
—Kevin Crothers  
"Rob breaks free from the 'by-the-numbers' criticisms to produce his heaviest and most epic album. Contains the best version of Rob's classic song 'I'm A Warrior.'"  
—Chris Beck



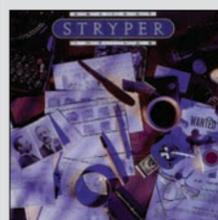
22 King's X  
*Out of the Silent Planet* | Megaforce | 1988

"Most people know this band from the mega hits achieved from album two and later, but album number one is where it started, and is not to be overlooked. Lyrically a much more 'spiritual' album, the riffs and songs are top-notch."  
—Jeff McCormack



23 Tourniquet  
*Pathogenic Ocular Dissonance* | Pakaderm | 1992

"Arguably their best album, *Tourniquet* achieved near perfection from beginning to end with brutally heavy guitars and lyrics."  
—Chris Beck



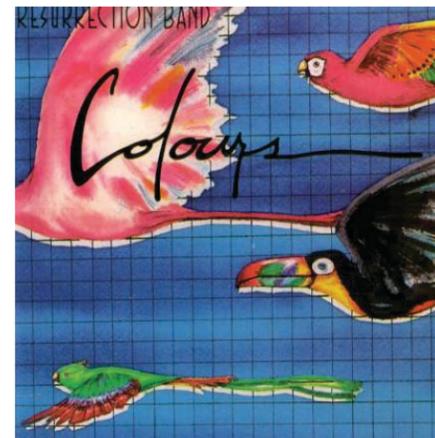
24 Stryper  
*Against the Law* | Enigma | 1990

"Both highly underrated and underappreciated when it was released, this one stands up well over time and was probably their most consistently great collection of songs ever."  
—Doc



25 Living Sacrifice  
*Reborn* | Solid State | 1997

"Along with Extol's *Burial*, this riff-heavy reincarnation of the band provided a monumental surge in the credibility of Christian metal circa late 1990's."  
—Doc



of lament, pain, sorrow, hurt and blues. They used the blues throughout their career, expressing the anguish of the human condition and subsequent redemption of it with an electrified effectiveness. After all, their mission wasn't one of just music, but one of evangelism and social concern that was explicitly stated in their lyrics. It was this underlying current of concern for their fellow man that inherently forced Rez to expand their musical direction throughout the years.

By the end of 1985, it seemed that the musical soil Rez had plowed in the church was coming to fruition with a seemingly endless parade of new up and comers. First, it must be said that the team of Glenn and Wendi Kaiser, Stu Heiss, Jim Denton and John Herron had seemingly been going strong for years. The album tour cycle, I'm sure, took its toll, and once they fulfilled their contract with Sparrow with *Between...* the Rez band seemingly disappeared.

Perhaps a rest and a sabbatical for the band was in order. During that time, Jim Denton went to seminary and moved on to other ministry. Yet in the Christian press, I don't remember seeing much about them. It was like they had simply vanished, and in the period between 1985 and 1988 all seemed quiet, at least to this fan. You must remember this was all before the internet and instant communication.

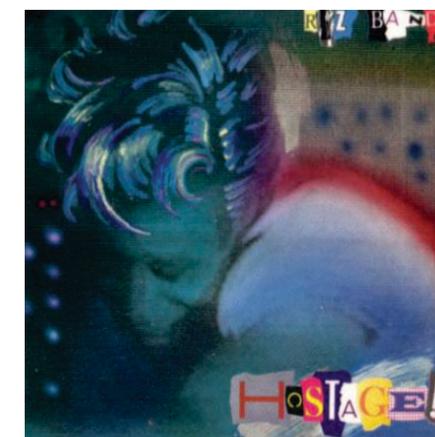
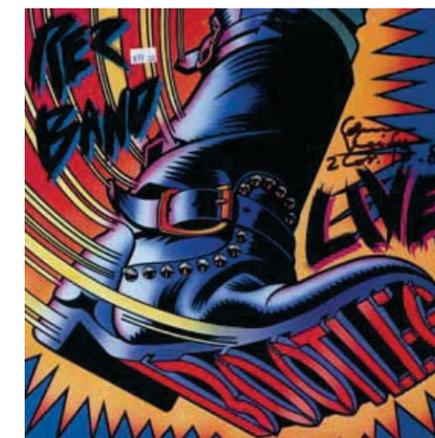
The landscape of Christian metal/hard rock had changed pretty radically by 1988. In 1983, Rez, Barnabas, Jerusalem and Daniel Band had been the torchbearers of hard driving music with a Christian point of view. In five short years, the explosion of heavy metal and hard rock with a Christian point of view was enormous. Obviously, the burst of Stryper onto the scene in 1984 brought about a lot of change, but by the time 1988 hit there was Barren Cross, Bloodgood, Bride, Sacred Warrior, Saint, Leviticus, Messiah Prophet, Philadelphia, Whitecross, Trytan, and Vengeance Rising just to name a few. These bands had grabbed the attention and wonder of us metal fans almost to the exclusion of what had gone on before. These bands provided albums devoid of three or four musical styles per release, but just stayed the course with loud and pounding metal.

When it had been announced that Rez was going to put out a new album, I was excited. I really looked forward to 1988 as that new album *Silence Screams* would be forthcoming. With its release, there was again another progression in songwriting and production, and it even included a secular cover, "In the Presence of the Lord." I remember reading that Glenn knew what he meant when he sang that song, and there was no doubt of that. Wendi never sounded better, and with new bass player Roy Montroy aboard, there seemed to be no doubt what direction they were going musically – even harder driving rock n roll with an even bluesier edge than before.

I believe that Rez hit their best stride with the next string of albums *Silence Screams*, *Innocent Blood* and *Civil Rites*. These three albums contained the best songwriting and production with an emphasis on consistency throughout each release. You wouldn't find any pop styling or techno influenced material, but you did find metal-edged bluesy hard rock. Yet it seemed at times – in the conversations of the day – that they were overlooked by many fans as "old school" and as somewhat passé. I found this, both then and now, hard to believe. How anyone can honestly overlook this period of the band in particular is just amazing to me. From the rock n roll anthems "Light/Light" and "Right on Time," to the pure metal atmospherics of "Altar of Pain," "80,000" or the blues rock drenched "Where Roses Grow," "Rain Dance" or "Lovespeak," this simply was not the same band of 1978-1985. Stu Heiss seemed to play it with a more straight forward approach (less jazz inspired solos) and Glenn Kaiser showed why he is one of the most underrated guitar players, period. There is something to be said for technical prowess, but to harness that and dig deep and share your soul through your instrument is something else all together.

After releasing their classic double live album *XX Years*, 1993's *Reach of Love* and the Ty Tabor produced *Lament*, the Resurrection Band called it a day.

It's hard to truly gauge their impact and their contribution to music with a Christian point of view. Just from a cursory observation, it seems clear that their purpose was two-fold: first, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and

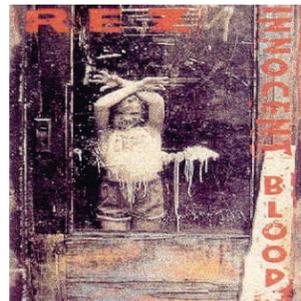
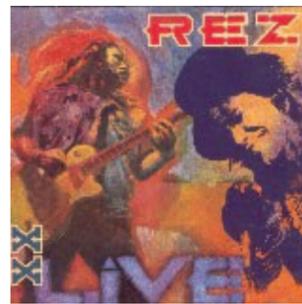


It's hard to truly gauge their impact and their contribution to music with a Christian point of view. Just from a cursory observation, it seems clear that their purpose was two-fold: first, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the joy of the new life in Him; secondly, and not intentionally, they plowed up the hard and stiff ground of a subculture that likes to have things nice, neat and easily cataloged.

Resurrection Band | cont'd

the joy of the new life in Him; secondly, and not intentionally, they plowed up the hard and stiff ground of a subculture that likes to have things nice, neat and easily cataloged. It's safe to say that if these musical missionaries hadn't answered this call the impact that other artists, who came later, would've been less. Surely our Lord can do and use whom He desires, and yes, He could've used another artist perhaps, but He didn't.

The music and the lyrical impact Rez has had on me is one of immeasurable proportions. I'm often reminded of the time that I struggled with the silence of God in my own life. It was one of the many desert experiences we as believers have. I was listening to their song "Rain Dance" from *Silence Screams*. Driving down the freeway I kept imploring the Lord, "Please let me know that You're here." It was during that time the lyric of "Lord send Your rain/rain/rain/rain" came across my stereo speakers. It was at that precise moment that sprinkles of fresh rain appeared on my windshield from the overcast sky. A coincidence? It was a reminder to me that the Lord is still ever present. It was those types of reminders and insights that the Resurrection Band included in their lyrical content and in their concert testimonials. It's been those kinds of insights that have elevated them from mere evangelical musicians to a status of insightful observers of the human condition in all its ugliness and shame. Yet instead of just providing a nice neat Jesus answer, they remind us that life is hard for all, even a believer. But the power we receive from the Lord can give us the strength and the hope to carry on. It's that hope that has made me a grateful fan. If you desire more from music than just entertainment – such as encouragement and a reflection of our true selves – then one must see Rez as one of the most important Christian artists in the history of rock 'n' roll.



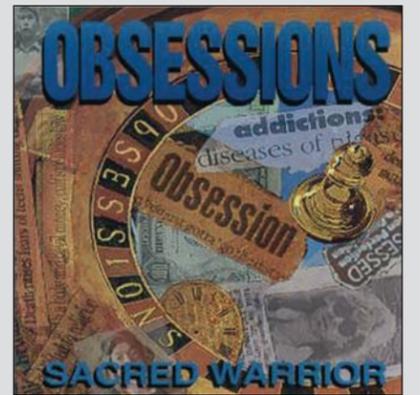
5 Extol  
*Undeceived* | Solid State | 2000

"Arguably the greatest amalgam of progressive and extreme metal ever crafted by Christians."  
—Doc



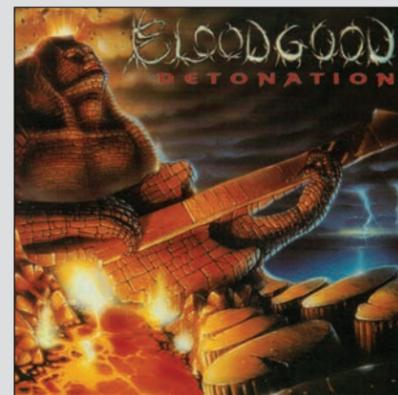
6 To Hell With The Devil  
Stryper | Enigma | 1986

"The bumble-bee boys ripped into the scene with *Yellow and Black Attack*, grabbed the reins of greatness with *Soldiers...*, and this release took them over the top with many major hits. A true pinnacle of their melodic pop-metal greatness."  
—Jeff McCormack



7 Sacred Warrior  
*Obsessions* | Intense | 1991

"Christendom's best power metal band ever hit their high water mark with this collection of songs which perfectly blended Queensryche, Iron Maiden and their unique and inspiring take on the scene."  
—Doc



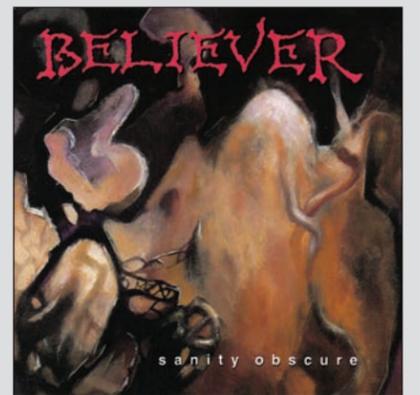
8 Bloodgood  
*Detonation* | Frontline | 1987

"A masterful release that screams for a rock opera production to go with it, and the band did just that. "Crucify" and "Messiah" are a one-two punch of power and emotion."  
—Jeff McCormack



9 Bride  
*Snakes in the Playground* | Star Song | 1992

"The Christian scene's answer to GNR's *Appetite for Destruction*, these hard-hitting songs – to this day – remain gutsy, catchy and memorable."  
—Doc



10 Believer  
*Sanity Obscure* | R.E.X. | 1990

"No other album is as equally technical and brutal as *Sanity Obscure*."  
—Chris Beck

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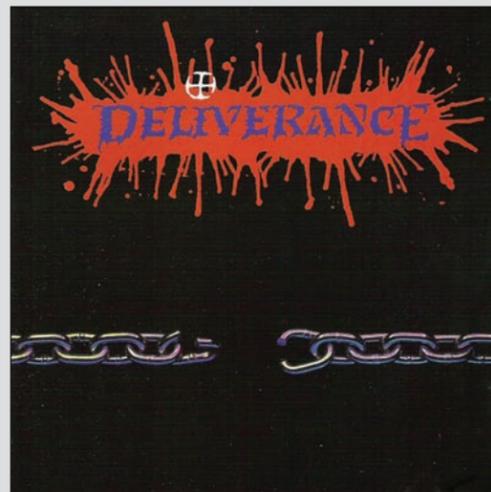
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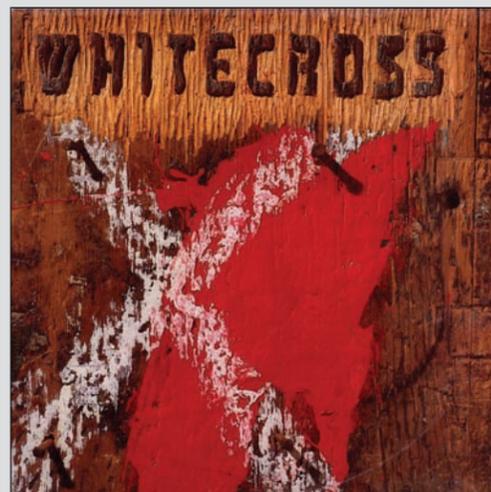
*"A timeless slab of gut-wrenching metal, combining the best of technical riffs, progression, speed metal and love of classical music in a way that only these Christian thrash kings can."*  
—Chris Gatto

2 Tourniquet  
*Psycho Surgery* | Intense | 1991



*"One of the first major thrash releases in the Christian market – combining an early Testament/Metallica feel – it still gets the head banging, fits pumping and air guitar screaming."*  
—Jeff McCormack

3 Deliverance  
*Deliverance* | Intense | 1989



*"Gritty, Ratt-inspired melodic metal with memorable songs, featuring Rex Carroll – our scene's first real shredding guitar hero."*  
—Doc

4 Whitecross  
*Whitecross* | Pure Metal | 1987

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# The Full Armor of God Broadcast

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**1 Vengeance Rising**  
*Human Sacrifice* | Intense | 1989

*"Undeniably the most brutal and controversial Christian metal release up to its time, this one essentially paved the way for the plethora of Christian extreme metal which followed."*  
 —Doc

*"Trivial detail: Did you know that that's Pastor Bob's hand on the cover?"*  
 —Doug Van Pelt

The top

1000

# Christian Metal Albums of All Time

The what? As managing editor for *Heaven's Metal*, I – with the help of our editorial team – was tasked with delivering an answer to this query. Unlike *HM*, where the list was formulated primarily by editor Doug Van Pelt, the plan here was to create a “consensus” list. Sounds easy, right? Not so fast. One, do you know how hard it is to define “metal?” Two, do you know how hard it is to get a bunch of metalheads to agree on the definition of “metal?” Three, do you know how hard it is to get a group of metalheads to come to a consensus on which “metal” is the best? Three strikes, you're out ... almost. By the sweat of our brows – after tons of passionate and earnest fighting – and by the grace of God, we accomplished our goal ... more or less. After all, there is no way to get 100% perfection or agreement on a list; someone will always end up hating someone else's choices in the end.

What is metal anyway? Metal (i.e. heavy metal music) shares many of its attributes with its literal “elemental” origins: it's both electrically charged and heated, literally and figuratively; from a mechanical standpoint, metal flexes (a sign of strength) and is malleable (is susceptible to creativity) but it rarely breaks; it's certainly loud and lustrous (akin to thunder and lightning) which has the combined effect of shock and surprise; like gold or silver, it's universal, found in virtually all societies – revered by all kinds, regardless of socioeconomic class, ethnicity, gender or age. But, while these virtues of metal derive nicely from the literal definition of the word, it is the figurative aspect of metal – metal's “mettle,” so to speak – that best defines the uniqueness of the genre from a musical perspective. In other words, while the abrasiveness of the sound gives metal its edge, the attitude and content of the music give metal its character.

Through brainstorming – and much debate – we decided to keep the music on our list as true to the above definition as possible ... Probably one of the main reasons you won't find any Petra – as influential and blessed as they were – on this list. In the end, we present to you a nice mixture of titles that reflect the past and current subgenres of metal: power, progressive, melodic, classic and extreme ... with a few oddballs thrown in for grins.

Using Doug's 5 criteria for great music (see the *HM* 25th anniversary issue), along with a healthy inoculation of “this is what my heart and soul tells me is great,” each writer in our karew submitted a ranked, top 100 list. Points were assigned, votes were tallied and a consensus list was formulated. But we didn't stop there. This list was further scrutinized, criticized and dissected until we had a reasonable agreement on both the content and the rankings of the titles.

The list represents a good mixture of old and new – with some forecasting incorporated as well. Nevertheless, please keep a few things in perspective: this isn't a “best band” list – titles were chosen on the overall consistency and greatness of the songs on the release rather than the sole impact of the band on the scene; multiple titles per band were allowed (Stryper scoring the highest with three of their titles on the list); and most importantly, the purpose of this list is to honor greatness within our scene – to recognize artists who have been committed to honoring God through the highest quality metal the world has to offer. Praise God, up the irons ... and bring the metal. Selah.

–Jonathan “Doc” Swank

# MASS

## BEATIN' THE ODDS

BY CHRIS BECK

Ever since the release of their album *Voices in the Night* in 1989, I have followed the band Mass, who are proudly named after where they are from – Boston, Massachusetts. Mass is still going strong today, as evidenced by the well-received shows I saw them play at Rocklahoma in 2008 and 2009. I recently caught up with lead singer Louis D'Augusta to discuss their new album, *Sea of Black*, a great release that successfully mixes in a few modern elements with the classic Mass sound.

**Chris Beck: You have a new album coming out called *Sea of Black*. What can fans expect to hear on this new album?**

Louis D'Augusta: This album is a lot heavier and a bit darker than our last one, *Crack of Dawn*, but it still has a lot of melody and great hooks. I think it's our best album yet and believe old and new fans will highly enjoy it.

**What is the meaning of the album title, *Sea of Black*?**

Pretty simple – good vs. evil, with the hope that good will prevail in the end!

***Sea of Black* is the band's seventh album, which is amazing continuity in today's music industry. When Mass started over 25 years ago, did you ever think you would still be playing this style of music?**

No, not really. I can't believe how quickly the years have gone by and all that we have achieved. What amazes me the most is how much better we have gotten over the years as musicians and how our love and passion for the style of music we play is still alive – if not more alive – in us today!

**What are some of the topics covered by the lyrics of *Sea of Black*?**

Most of the lyrics I write are autobiographical, so it's usually something that has happened in my life or a situation I have seen. There are other times when I have read something and thought about putting a non-fictional story to it. *Sea of Black's* lyrics deal with old relationships that never seemed to pan out, such as on the songs “All the Years Gone,” “More Than a Friend” and “Ashes to Ashes,” or about what's right and wrong to me and how to get back into the right, like on the songs “Falling From Grace,” “The Right Side” and “Sea of Black.” We want our listeners to come away with the hope that there is a chance that all things will work out in the end. I'm a sucker for a happy ending (he laughs). Then again, we do deal with the presence of evil that is always around us and we must be aware and know who the true God is!

**Mass continues to play live shows, which can be challenging to do for many reasons – financial, family demands, etc. Why do you think it is important to continue to play live shows?**

Yes, you are right. It is getting harder and harder these days, but it has always been very important for us to get out and perform in order to promote our latest release to old and new fans of the band. We also see it as a chance to try out new material and see how the crowd reacts. We just make sure that in this stage of our careers it is something we are interested in doing and beneficial to our purpose.

**Do you have any tour plans to support *Sea of Black* in 2010?**

Right now there are no big tour plans. We will probably wait and see how well the new CD is received and see what offers come in.

**Most Heaven's Metal readers know Mass from your album *Voices in the Night*, which Stryper's Michael Sweet helped produce and also sang background vocals for. What memories stand out about recording this album and how does the band view this album today? Also, do you keep in touch with Michael, and if so, do you have any plans to collaborate with him again in the future?**

The first thing that stands out in my mind is the graciousness of Michael Sweet and his lovely wife, Kyle, who has sadly now passed away. By the way, we dedicated a song on *Sea of Black* called “Till We Meet Again” to Kyle Sweet. I put myself in the frame of mind of how I would feel if I had just lost the love of my life. Michael and Kyle pretty much let four strangers come and live in their home for over two months while we recorded the *Voices in the Night* album. They did this in order for us to save on the recording budget, which was not that big compared to what some of the other acts were getting at the time. We had a blast recording that album and it was something totally different for us. It was our first time recording in California and we moved from studio to studio, which we had never done before. We would record the drums in one studio and then move to another for guitars, then another for vocals, etc. The band and I still love that album and it's a part of our history now. I see Michael from time to time, but we both lead very busy lives. He last worked with us on the *Crack of Dawn* album where he and Kenny Lewis engineered two songs called “It's You” and “Empty Soul.” I was a guest of Kim Scholz (the wife of Tom Scholz, from the band Boston) and attended their kick-off show here in Boston back in September. We got to chat backstage for a while. We also hung out with the guys backstage at last year's Rocklahoma event. Mass headlined the south stage that night. Prior to that, myself, Gene and Tracie Ferrie from Stryper performed a few acoustical numbers at the Kyle Rae Sweet benefit show. We have no plans right now to work with Michael, but you never know what the future holds.

**What are some of the bands that have influenced Mass and who of today's artists do you follow?**

Growing up we were all into bands like Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Beatles, Queen, Aerosmith, Black Sabbath, Angel, Grand Funk, Yes, Kiss, etc. Today, personally I enjoy listening to bands like Gotthard, The Poodles and Sixx: A.M., and still listen to some of the older bands that have recently released new CDs like Stryper's *Murder by Pride* and Winger's *Karma*.

**Is the band able to make a living in the music industry alone, or do the members of Mass have other jobs as well?**

Even though we are still collecting royalties to this day from records we made over twenty years ago, we all have day jobs that keep us very busy. So with the music, work and family life, it gets to be a juggling act at times.

**Any message you would like to share with the readers of *Heaven's Metal*?**

I would like to thank *Heaven's Metal* for giving me the opportunity to share with your readers my thoughts on the new Mass release, *Sea of Black*. Go out and pick it up. You won't be disappointed!

HEAVEN'S  
METAL

# 25 YEARS OF HEAVEN'S METAL

## DOC'S EXAMINATION OF A LEGACY

BY JONATHAN "DOC" SWANK

"...so, not only was I amazed by the degree to which Christian metal had burgeoned since 1985, I was astounded that here was this magazine that nicely captured the essence and ministry of the scene, yet perfectly balanced good journalism with a Christian worldview."



Although I have been associated with *HM* and have been an integral part of *Heaven's Metal* over the past 4-5 years, my introduction to the magazine – and the majority of the Christian metal scene for that matter – did not occur until nearly 7 years after the magazine's inception. While I was of course acquainted with Rez, Petra and Stryper by the time I graduated from high school in 1985, I largely ignored the scene (with the exception of Stryper) during my college "rebellion" years when I was too busy either trying to survive the rigorous "weed out" pre-med curriculum at Penn State or applying myself to the art of beer drinking and tailgating. Whether I was spending "Thursday night out" with my cadre of metal crazed buddies sneaking into The Scorpion (the local metal bar) to sample all the local talent (and of course, NOT to check out all the "big hair" metal ladies) or harassing the local frat houses on Friday nights, my "student activities" left little time for any spiritual cultivation. Fortunately, my explorations into the notorious two carbon molecule and the heavy metal bar scene were not the only extracurricular activities I pursued – I kept my musical musings both active and diverse. I continued private trumpet lessons – practicing my horn daily as I had been doing since the 5th grade – and participated in anything from symphonic wind ensemble to jazz band. I also dabbled with the drums (a passion that had started in high school) and ingested a steady diet of Metallica, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Motley Crue. Furthermore, amidst those wild – and way too many rainy – days in Happy Valley, my interest in writing was spawned. Little did I know at the time that it would be possible for me to combine my love of both music and words into a single endeavor, let alone one that would edify the body of Christ ... that is until I discovered *Heaven's Metal*.

After a nearly tragic "flipping of my automobile" accident in the summer of '89 – the summer before I was to enter medical school in Philadelphia – I rededicated my life to Christ. While med school kept me very busy – with no time for musical pursuits – I was able to find good Christian fellowship and encouragement. However, with the exception of one friend, who introduced me to AD, no one I hung out with had any interest whatsoever in heavy metal. (And it's probably not shocking to learn, to this day, that not many in my profession practice stress reduction through "headbanging.") I suppose I was not unlike some others after a conversion type experience, I rejected most of my secular music and tried, instead, to focus on Christ-centric music. Unfortunately, I could only endure my roommate's strumming and singing of Steven Curtis Chapman and the like for so long.

Thankfully, sometime during the arduous 3rd year of med school – that "endless" year with continuous rotations through various clerkships – I found *Heaven's Metal* ... or it found me: issue #38 (Bride). The cover picture is forever etched in my neural network, as I must have read the thing like 30 times front-to-back, absorbing every detail in the fine print, ads, etc. Looking back, a few highlights come to mind: Dale Thompson's explanations about tattoos; the infamous Undercover interview with the blow-up quote, which proclaimed, "I don't want to put out religious oatmeal that's got nothing but a bunch of Christian sound bytes in it;" the Jason Dryer fan interview with Randy Rose; the Lust Control *We Are Not Ashamed* review; and the totally amazing "so and so sez" (as I've affectionately come to call them) interview with Corrosion of Conformity. Moreover, it was in the details and personal touches that I realized this magazine was totally "it" for me. From Doug's public apology to Joey Taylor (Undercover) for a journalistic mistake, to the carefully selected "blow-up quotes," to the detailed reviews, to the heartfelt, back page devotional honoring Doug's new (at the time) bride Charlotta, everything about the magazine flowed so well and just seemed to resonate with my soul.

So, not only was I amazed by the degree to which Christian metal had burgeoned since 1985, I was astounded that here was this magazine that nicely captured the essence and ministry of the scene, yet perfectly balanced good journalism with a Christian worldview. Ironically though, when I showed issue #38 to my aunt – who had been a missionary in Africa for some years – she looked at the cover and said, "These guys don't look like Christians." While at the time her words stung like a scorpion (I had a lot of respect for her Christian walk), I can look back now, laugh, and reflect upon the fact that countless others – my fearless editor, for example – have probably been stung in a similar fashion by the naysayers enough times to induce anaphylactic shock.

After exploring the next few issues (Whitecross, Guardian and Mortification), with equal parts analysis and wonder, I was convinced that someday, somehow I wanted to be a part of this magazine. Subsequently, I delved into the Christian scene with

ardor, collecting up the back catalogs of Bloodgood, Barren Cross, Deliverance, Whitecross, etc., and checked out as many shows in the Philadelphia and Lancaster area that my schedule and budget would tolerate. I still remember anticipating every issue of *Heaven's Metal* like a chemically impaired anesthesiologist waiting for his next fentanyl fix – each issue keeping me connected with the happenings in this eclectic community of believers, many of whom I could relate to better than those in my own church. Since issue #38, I've been interminably connected.

When I graduated from medical school in 1993, I went on full-time active duty as a medical officer in the Army, simultaneously serving and training in an internship and residency in internal medicine at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. If I had known that the next 10 years of my life would be as challenging as it eventually turned out, I probably would have ended up in an asylum ... or worse, dead, instead of sitting here pondering the 25th Anniversary of *Heaven's Metal*. Given the tumultuous course of events that ensued in my life – along with the magazine's change from *Heaven's Metal* to *HM* – I surmised that there was a good chance I would never get to contribute to the 'zine and its zealous cause. But that Van Pelt guy, despite the criticisms he endured, never gave up ... and so neither did I.

Although circumstances over the years never afforded me a trip to the mighty Cornerstone, I did manage – during my 7-year stint in the Lone Star state – to make a few trips to Texas Rockfest where I was able to check out my favorite bands, like Mortification and Tourniquet. Occasionally, I would road trip down to Austin to check out a few shows. Again, without *HM*, I would have never known about any of these events.

*HM* continued to be a comfort to me through the darkest times – like while I was stationed at Fort Hood, and especially when I deployed with the 1st Cavalry Division to Bosnia as a battalion surgeon. I remember introducing all of my medics and bunk mates to *HM* – one soldier disappointed that it wasn't some hardcore porn magazine! *HM* was truly light in a dark place.

Years passed, my love for metal waxed, metal experienced a resurgence, and in 2004 Doug had a dream – resurrect *Heaven's Metal*. I, along with many others, couldn't have been more elated. I don't recall the exact details, but through various emails Doug and I somehow got connected. And it should come as no surprise to those of you who know Doug that it was during a discussion about Scorpions – *Unbreakable* that he realized my love for metal. Over the years, I've kept reviews of each CD I own (mostly as a hobby) and at some point I must have shared some of those reviews with him. Through this correspondence, he realized my love for writing. I don't think I ever specifically asked Doug if I could be involved with the 'zine – I just put out the general offer to help – but in 2006 he asked me to join the editorial "karew." Ever since then I've contributed to both *HM* and *Heaven's Metal* – now serving primarily as managing editor for the fanzine. *Heaven's Metal* remains a big part of my life, heart and soul. Incidentally, there is a wall in my home dedicated to *Heaven's Metal* and the bands it has supported; one of my trucks even sports HVNS MTL plates. (See photos)

Most of you reading this magazine are already aware of the myriad ways in which *Heaven's Metal* has made an impact on the lives of believers in the hard music and metal community over the past 25 years – your own experiences with the magazine and at live venues, such as Cornerstone, stand as a testimony to what this magazine has accomplished. Without a doubt, your stories of inspiration and encouragement could better chronicle the *Heaven's Metal* history and fill far more pages than I could ever pen in a lifetime. But for me, the opportunity to freely serve a magazine that has served me for almost 20 years is a dream come true. To be able to talk about my favorite music and edify Christ's "body" is a tremendous blessing. My hope is that I have served in a capacity worthy of the *Heaven's Metal* legacy. Furthermore, it's a privilege to work alongside such a great group of "brothers," not to mention my friend and mentor, DVP, whose work and life and person have blessed more individuals than there are hairs left on his head. So what's the doctor's prognosis? Happy 25th Birthday *Heaven's Metal*, you're good for another 25 years. May God continue to bless you!

