

its vocalised counterparts deliver in spades. The track itself never really gets going and, as a listener, you find yourself wanting to urge it on.

All things considered, this is an extremely well executed album that would sound great on any mainstream rock radio and is well worth a listen if you're a post hardcore, alternative or a general rock fan.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧

BENJAMIN JR LEESE

FALLEN FATE

"Into The Black"
Genre: Melodic Death Metal
Independent Release



Fallen Fate are a bit of a mixed bag on their latest release, "Into The Black". My initial impression was one of ambivalence, as I heard melodic death metal tinged with some thrasher tendencies and raw, growled vocals, and I couldn't help but feel that this has been done already. But as I played the album over and over, I became

quite impressed by the band's musicianship and use of instruments to create an atmospheric, gothic quality around the songs. I was quite stunned by Fallen Fate's musical maturity and song composition, which sits somewhere between Septicflesh and Lamb Of God. The album is a concept based on a young girl called Vespa who denounced her faith in God and is ultimately possessed by a demon. In this department, some of the more symphonic and melodic arrangements work quite well to create atmosphere, however in terms of the storyline and vocal comprehension, it isn't always possible to hear the lyrics clearly. A truly great concept album marries a well-told story with some poignant playing, and we only seem to get half the deal on "Into The Black". If the vocals were slightly clearer, then it may have been an easier storyline to follow, but the music throughout the album is inspired.

The songs on this release range from the brutalising "Blackened Within", with its groove soaked, melodic death metal strains and guttural vocals, through to the title track, which features a melancholic instrumental start before launching into a vocal tirade and pummeling blast beats. This number once again sports some great guitar sections and lots of atmospheric moments. But the album also manages to introduce clean and brutal vocals on "I Welcome The Dark" and "Vespa", and on both of these tracks the vocals are more audible.

Fallen Fate have recorded some brilliant music on "Into The Black" and use frequent time changes, heavy guitaring and growled vocals to create a heavy, yet melancholic atmosphere around the tracks. However as a concept album, I thought the vocals weren't clear enough to supplement the playing and as a result the story remained a bit of a mystery.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥

GLENN BUTLER

LOVER UNDER COVER

"Into The Night"
Genre: AOR
Escape Music



Nice name, but this lover may not have the stamina to satisfy. Boasting members of Coldspell, Last Autumn's Dream and Gypsy Rose, plus Mikael Carlsson cracking the whip, this is not really a supergroup, more like a prettysmashinggroup and the sounds within are AOR with a twist.

That twist is just a sense of where they are. It can often seem as though they're piping this through from the 80s, making us take a second look.

That famous lover Casanova is lasciviously reported to have numbered a nun among his conquests. This tries to get it up, but "Crushing Stones" is strictly missionary, all expected, spent after giving us exactly the usual, and "Life Is Easy" doesn't really even achieve tumescence, just hangs around the foothills of the AOR sound, breezy but bereft.

Ava Gardner, Hollywood starlet, apparently a strong, liberated and very happily physical woman, was once asked why she was going out with Frank Sinatra, who was physically unprepossessing at the time. She supposedly replied that he may be 110 pounds, but 10 pounds of it was his cock. If only all the tracks here had such heft. "Playboy No 7" has energy, with a soft centre though, and groovy, rockier riff, and "Close To The Truth" tries to extend its effect long past the last note, creating an uber AOR feel, inspiring, soaring, softening... no, not softening... hang on... no, it's no good...

Perhaps they hit pay dirt on "The Game Is On" which manages to harness the power of the slower riff and a catchy chorus to the benefit of the song, it's construction holding all that

exuberance and spreading it around.

This lover should definitely be out in the open. There's lots here to enjoy, but you might feel your ardour cooling about thirty minutes in.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦

STEVE SWIFT

NOTHING

"Guilty Of Everything"
Genre: Post Hardcore
Relapse Records



Formed in Philadelphia in 2011 by Domenic Palermo after he took a lengthy musical hiatus, Nothing seems to be just two guys, the aforementioned Palermo and Brandon Setta. This is an album which both frustrates and entertains in equal measure. The sound on all the tracks is quite similar throughout, and the vocals

seem to have been recorded at a distance and in amongst a helluva lots of fuzzy guitars. It does sound like a preliminary take of an album that could have been done by the likes of Smashing Pumpkins, an album without much in the way of song individuality, still waiting for the missing spit and polish to be filled in sometime along the way to make it the finished article.

I kinda get what Nothing are trying to do here, hence the quite liking what's been done. I'm just not sure that the great listening public are ready to embrace such an effort and give it the attention it deserves. When Nothing back away from the fuzzy guitars, as on the likes of "Somersault", then the potential to pen good songs with a bit of drive and direction shows itself.

This is not one that you should ignore by any means, just be sure and check out some of the preview tracks before you plunge headlong into the full album.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥

ALLAN BANNERMAN

NOCTURNAL

"Storming Evil"
Genre: Thrash Metal
High Roller Records



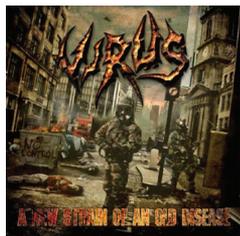
Nocturnal are a good old fashioned, occult worshipping heavy metal band out of Germany, rattling out from the badlands that separate heavy metal and old fashioned thrash. Third album "Storming Evil" is a whirling dervish of a fast, aggressive and, on first impression, rather mundane album, but hang in there and you'll find that it isn't a half bad, quite engaging listen. It does not try to be clever as it flips effortlessly between NWOBH flavoured metal and trad thrash. The intensity is off the scale, the occult styling's inevitable, and the witchy vocal bloody relentless, and combined with the bleak, demon evoking subject matter, it's all rather comical (check out the band names). Luckily, "Storming Evil" has enough musical ability and dexterity to offset the comedy factor enough to make the album quite enjoyable, if a bit samey. Just one thing though, what would all these devil worshipping bands do if they found out O! Nick was actually a hepcat free form jazz fiend? Now, there's a thought to ponder, but it would explain a lot ahahaha...

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤

PHIL KANE

VIRUS

"A New Strain Of An Old Disease"
Genre: Thrash
Killer Metal Records



There was a time when Virus were just as fondly remembered for their turbulent gigs as the quality of their bruising thrash metal. Still building a comeback five years after reforming, it's refreshing to see that they're still bloody angry, especially with the spat lyrics of remaining founder member

Coke Finlay to the fore on this latest EP. When the band joins in with unified vocals, there's a punk feel to the sound, whilst buzzsaw riffs are meaty and shot forth at often lightning speed, and there's some revelatory stick work, especially in conducting the numerous time changes on "Decline". Though the sound becomes a little chaotic at times, verging on tech death with the rhythms of "Human Disposal Unit" and losing a little cohesion at times, there's an ever-present ferocity and an occasional groove, especially on the slingshot

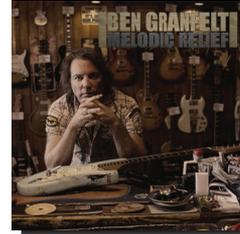
"Murder In The Moshpit", which is both magnetic and enjoyable. The review copy regrettably concludes with an execrable cover of The Proclaimers' "500 Miles", but with the lack of a listing, one can only hope that this is just an error. Despite there being no originality contests for this stuff any longer, it shouldn't prevent us from thanking the gods of metal that these guys are still doing their thing.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥

PAUL QUINN

BEN GRANFELT

"Melodic Relief"
Genre: Instrumental
Supersounds Music



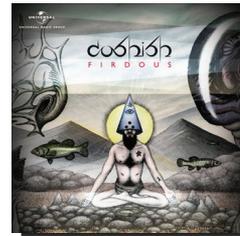
Ben Granfelt gets about a bit, having played with the likes of Gringos Locos, Wishbone Ash, Los Bastardos Finlandeses and more. This is his eleventh solo album, and he's welcome to churn out another one any time he likes, as "Melodic Relief" is a joyous thing. An instrumental rock album that is straightforward and has a fabulously upbeat atmosphere, his guitar style is bluesy with an edge of shred, but never oversteps the mark. Close comparisons would be Paul Gilbert and Richie Kotzen. Some excellent songwriting and a superlative fretwork make this a genuine pleasure to listen to.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧

ANDREW HAWNT

COSHISH

"Firdous"
Genre: Rock
Universal Music India



Sometimes you read a press release and you know exactly what a band are going to sound like before you ever put the CD on. Other times, you're taken completely by surprise. This was one of those times.

Coshish describe themselves as a Mumbai based band who fuse progressive rock with Hindi rock. So I was expecting something along the lines of Orphaned Land: progressive music fused with elements of the band's more local influences. But when you listen to Coshish, that isn't what you get. In fact, opener "Firdous" sounds reminiscent of the music to Nordic Noir TV show "The Bridge", but rockier. Then you get songs that have an almost Celtic feel to them, kind of like Panic Room meets Runrig.

There are some proggy moments though; "Maya" and "Mukti" are both excellent pieces of neo prog. Other highlights would have to be the upbeat melodic rock of "Coshish" and the wonderful "Bhula Do Unhey", which starts slow and builds to a fantastic finish.

The lyrics are all in Hindi, so I have no idea what they're singing about, but that's not really a problem. This is a great album full of diverse sounds and styles, and not at all what I expected. You should give it a go.

POWERPOINTS: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧⑨

MARTIN HOWELL

RISING ANGER

"Mindfinder"
Genre: Metalcore
Bastardized Recordings



It's always tempting to refer to August Burns Red when comparing metalcore bands. Pleasingly, this debut album from German quintet Rising Anger displays a constant rawness that belies the Pennsylvania outfit's more recent releases, with a vitality more reminiscent of Parkway Drive and anthemic, chanted group choruses that tip the cap

to While She Sleeps. After the near post-black intro however, the more traditional staccato rhythms, chopped riffs and ploughing breakdowns are abundant, as are the agonised screams and plaintive, flickering leads. It's occasionally disjointed - "Your Arcadia" has screamed vocals over almost indistinct instruments in its early stages, but there's real promise also: the lush lead work on the brief "MBM" is a delight, there's real meaning and emotion on "Black Hole", and the brooding, rousing "Everlasting Sparks" shows a maturity in spirit if not style.

Overall though, whilst not an unpleasant listen and despite the energy and enthusiasm bleeding from its grooves, it's all a