

SELECTED AND DISSECTED



TOXIC HOLOCAUST 'Conjure And Command'

RELAPSE
Whether it's the effect of finally having a full band with him in the studio or something else entirely, 'Conjure And Command' is the mindblowing landmark Joel Grind has threatened to make all along. It's

not like 2008's 'An Overdose' mention just the most recent already miles above the gate that makes up this yawn-inducing revival (seriously, how many '80s crossover-via-Munich do you people need?), but the entire. It's an instant classic. Joel and co rip into 'Judgement' can feel it in your bones. You love every single second.

THE LIVING FIELDS 'Running Out Of Daylight'

CANDLELIGHT
With 2007's hugely impressive self-titled debut, Chicago four-piece The Living Fields instantly announced themselves as one of progressive metal's most tantalising prospects; "progressive", that is, not simply in a lazy genre sense, but in a genuinely evolutionary way of songwriting. 'Running Out Of Daylight' firmly cements the quintet as one of the most pulsatingly forward-looking bands to emerge in recent years, with seven lustrous, affecting numbers (along with a neat and well-placed interlude) culminating in the 16-minute juggernaut of a title track. It's a firm sign that the Americans are heading in the right direction – that is, if they haven't already got there.

DEE TRAVEN

LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER 'Eterno Treblinka'

RELAPSE
slaughtered infants on the other side of the package crash-ogling fascistic LFAA, while agreeing designs on any alterations. Its 30 minutes of streamlined, well-honed nastiness succeeds in everything it sets out to do, but coming from a label that's played host to such an astonishing "who's-who" of extreme music's trailblazers, it's hard not to be a tad disappointed that 'Eterno Treblinka' aims no higher than that.

BENJ GOLANSKI

LOSS 'Despond'

PROFOUND LORE
Things move slower down South. Tennessee's Loss know that. It's been seven years since their demo, but now, their debut full-length has surfaced. Following the heavy footsteps of funeral doom's most despondent, Loss trawl the depths of their own misery. Mike Meacham's cavernous roars are all-encompassing, while each cripplingly slow, deliberate, and unthinkably doomed riff is crafted with the utmost care. The interplay between the plaintive melodic chords, melancholy organ and droning distortion bathe the album in an inescapable atmosphere of sadness, and give its more crushing moments room to breathe. The kind of emotional heft 'Despond' offers is rare; the skill with which it is rendered, rarer still.

KIM KELLY

MASTER MUSICIANS OF BUKKAKE 'Totem 3'

IMPORTANT
The final part in the mysterious Seattleite's trilogy, 'Totem Three' is a disorientating and eerie journey through exotic drones, primitive percussion and Eastern melodies. Moving from the dark and uneasy throb of opening track 'Bardo Sidpa' to the chanting mantras on 'Prophecy Of The White Camel', this is a bizarre and brain-frying trip through intense psychedelia and unusual instrumentation. The closing 'Failed Future' may sound a tad out of place with its dated sci-fi synthesizers, but this is still a fitting end to MMOB's exploration of a sonic palette that you won't find many other musicians brave enough to dip their toes into.

FREDDY PALMER

MISHKIN 'Row Away From The Rocks'

GRILLBURN
Formed in 2005, progressive Leeds-based metallers Mishkin have put together an impressive CV. They've already toured China (twice), as well as recorded a song for the Beijing Olympics and played shows with artists as slamming as Sepultura and as naff as Enter Shikari. 'Row Away From The Rocks' is the quintet's second EP, and another serious indication that they look like a pretty decent prospect. 'Good Day To Die' is an anthemic, forceful piece of groove metal, while 'Waiting For The World To Change' almost recalls that brief period when Incubus were actually okay. 'On Your Sleeve' is a bit lightweight, but 'Violation' brings proceedings to a much more solid finish.

MERLIN ALDERSLADE

LO-PAN 'Salvador'

SMALL STONE
Retro and hazily-produced stoner and doom rock that sounds like it's been plucked straight from the '70s is in vogue right now, and getting in on some of that bong-fuelled action is Columbus, Ohio four-piece Lo-Pan. This particular bunch of meaty riff-botherers have actually been ploughing away since 2005 and already have a couple of albums under their belts. Still, 'Salvador' merits the honour of being their strongest offering yet, and even if there's nothing like the kind of majestic power that Electric Wizard have to spare, the mixture of Sabbathian jams and moments of crushing heaviness – see 'Seed' for a neat dose of the latter – outlines this as a solid, if not mind-meltingly brilliant, piece of work.

MERLIN ALDERSLADE

ARMAGEDDON-IT!
TOXIC HOLOCAUST HAVE TO DECIDED TO GET ALL DARK AND APOCALYPTIC ON OUR ASS, BUT WHAT OF OTHER GREAT RECORDS INSPIRED BY REVELATIONS...