

Parade the Remains



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On Metal and Horror Films

Is there even such a thing as a metal film? A lot of people would probably point to examples like Deathgasm, Black Roses which feature metal as a focal point to the goings on. However I'd like to make the argument that there are films that don't feature that as a plot point but can not be discredited as "not metal". I do believe that metal is a great sponge that absorbs media around it well and incorporates it into its own medium. One of the most obvious examples I can think of off the top of my head is the classic Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2. That movie is actually a great place to start YOUR journey when it comes to fully understanding what I mean.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2's intro is featured on the absolute classic track Chainsaw Dismemberment off the album with the same name. This song showcases the closeness that metal and horror films have had on each other. These films often predate the bands that inspired them and later some of these same bands that were inspired by the splatter art of the 70s and 80s would go on to inspire many of the film makers that ended up making metal centric films. While TCM2 is a great example if you want to truly know how far this relationship goes we have to step just a touch further back than 1999.

Ohio, 1984; three dudes get into a garage and drop some of the most frantic and unhinged demos of 1984. Necrophagia, inspired by films only found in the aisle in the back of a video store labeled "Don't do it". Cannibal Holocaust is frequently brought up as an inspiration for these boys and it is quite obvious as it can be seen undeniably in the early music videos; specifically off of the VHS tape Through Eyes of the Dead, which features 5 music videos all shout like short horror films. I do NOT mean your grandpa's horror films either. These music videos are for the true sick horror freaks, and even if you don't like metal but do appreciate horror films as an aesthetic these are great examples of what I would call a seamless cross over. Most of the music videos give off vibes from cult classic films such as The Hills Have Eyes, Maniac, Zombi, etc. All of which I would argue do carry the aesthetic of metal, especially in modern death metal.

Modern death metal has really taken a swing at trying to branch out from the roots that were planted before them; some more subtle than others. Acid Witch being a more "subtle" example (I say that lightly haha). As they partake in more of the entire spirit of horror and more specifically their love for Halloween. Acid Witch however NEVER EVER lets their influences go unnoticed and for that it sets them apart from the genre in which they decided to take part in. Often using ironically more 80s tropes of witches, organs, and general spookiness from the Halloweens of nostalgia. These songs are more inspired in sound with the more childish things we think of for Halloween and turning the lyrics into gore infested unmarked VHS tapes from 1986.

A much more on the nose example of a band that takes complete inspiration from horror films is Fulci. Even the name lets you know EXACTLY what you are getting into. With riffs that are covered in flies, vocals that quake graves, and drums that alert the unaware. "Hell is full and now the dead walk the earth." Lyrically inspired by one of the masters of horror and one of the greatest inspirations to most metal bands Lucio Fulci of; House by the Cemetery, Zombi, and

Black Cat fame. Who is in my opinion the father of a lot of horror inspired metal. One of the earliest widespread perveyours of unfiltered, gore, filth, and slime.

Lucio Fulci having been the inspiration for small directors, outcasts, sikk fukkin horror freaks YEARS before metal would even be an apple in the eye of Lemmy (idgaf shut up). One on Top of the Other in 1969 would come out and set him apart from other giallo directors such as Dario Argento and Silvio Amadio. Fulci setting himself apart with not just outlandish gore and so many sex scenes you should get tested after watching: but with his delivery. Being self aware, which can be showcased in my favorite film of his, A Cat in the Brain. Where a director is constantly attacked by visions of the scenes he creates for others viewing pleasure only to find out they aren't visions. The depiction of self awareness and brutality is remarkable, leading to my final point.

The best of both of these worlds is when they are both aware of what they are and what they are trying to accomplish. The best forms of death metal inspired by these films are the ones that wear them as a badge of honor, that take a moment to tell people "yeah that movie made me make this album", the ones who use the samples, make the videos, buy the videos. The reason that there is such a deep synergy between horror films and metal is because of the humility it takes to make proper, whole hearted, genuine art with cheap disgusting gore. So the next time you watch Kill, Baby, Kill, remember the metal you could be making right afterwards.

Six Feet Under a Study

Six Feet Under is one of those bands that gets a very mixed reaction. It seems as though everyone wants to talk shit about this band but no one actually wants to commit to really listening to them. Well I did. I LISTENED TO EVERYTHING (and by that I mean only the full length albums). This band is without a doubt one of the strangest cases in metal I feel. This band seems to have a cult following, I have met more than a few people who swear this band is badass and has done no wrong. I have met people who think this band has done no right. I have met people who believe this band is the funniest band on planet earth. I am here to tell you what's up!

The first album we have is Haunted, this record is actually not that bad of a record. Nothing incredible but definitely quality. The album is packed with catchy riffs and groovy drum beats, making this album a pretty easy listen while drinking. The vocals are actually not that bad either. These are definitely not the vocals of the original Cannibal Corpse but these are in their own right nasty. This album should not be discredited; it has a lot going for it and makes for a fun listen.

Warpath is mediocre.

Maximum Violence I will advocate for. This album is genuinely good. The only criticism I'd think I'd even give is that the songs can feel a bit repetitive at points but nothing egregious. The positives definitely outweigh the negatives for sure. The riff work on this record is again memorable just like on Haunted but it definitely feels like it leans more on the death metal side of things whereas Haunted definitely has a nu metal slant.

Now this is the part where everything falls to pieces. With Graveyard Classics 1, this record feels like a karaoke session gone wrong. The comedic timing that Chris Barnes manages to achieve without realizing it I think puts Weird Al to shame at certain points. TNT being probably the most well known off this record is just a riot. This is the first time I pissed all over myself listening to SFU. That's not even mentioning the Holocaust cover which I had to look up and make sure that's what I was hearing. I can not believe the butchery on display here.

True Carnage is so mediocre. However... There is a masterpiece hidden within this pile of oatmeal death metal. One Bullet Left featuring Ice-T. By golly, gee whizz, boyo. This shit is fucking hilarious. I genuinely can not believe there were multiple people who had to sign off on this and did. This is by far the funniest thing I have heard to this point in the discography. When Ice-T just starts YELLING AT YOU LIKE THIS. About blowing your face off with a shotgun you will laugh so hard you piss all over yourself like I did. (This is the second time I pissed myself listening to SFU).

Bringer of Blood is trash. However! There is one song I am shocked no one else seems to bring up. Everyone talks about the later stuff, The Noose, Zodiac, even One Bullet Left. I am not letting this song get away unscathed because it is just as funny if not funnier than any of those.

That song being Sick In The Head. Holy crap. BRO. BROTHER. WHAT THE HELL. HOW DID NO ONE NOTICE THAT?

Graveyard Classics 2 banger.

13 sounds like nothing. I can not tell you a single thing about it. I can not condone nor condemn it because I can not remember it in the slightest. Probably BRAT diet death metal.

Commandment sounds like 13 but with a different name and better mixing. This is bran flake death metal.

Death Rituals, more like grape nut pudding death metal. Genuinely I am not trying to be cute with any of this. These are some of the most forgettable albums I have ever heard, in fact most of their discography is like that. Just a bunch of random sounding "heavy" riffs that hang for too long and go nowhere.

Graveyard Classics III, A Dangerous Meeting is just absolutely destroyed man. Like dude, come on man. Every single one of these tracks is just mind numbing torture.

Undead is probably the most competent record SFU put out in a while. It's nothing incredible but it is a huge upgrade in most respects. With some actual riffing and actual song writing. This album actually has a lot going for it in terms of even the vocal performance. This is the best Barnes has sounded so far. With actual depth to his voice again, sounding like a zombie. This is what Six Feet Under can be with the right team behind Barnes. This is the stuff I wish I heard more of in previous releases. Which makes total sense when you hear that Rob Arnold was on lead guitar for this record, lending SFU that Chimera edge that I think benefits a vocalist like Barnes surprisingly well.

Unborn yet again featuring some surprisingly competent instrumentation. Which again makes sense when you find out that Ola Englund was in charge of guitars for this record. Giving them a melodic and rhythmic edge when compared to previous albums. If Undead was more punishing this is more dynamic for sure. This album actually features some really cool moments wrapped in reverb and echo. The layering of everything is impeccable and again helps Chris Barnes fully realize his vocal vision. This and the previous album I think proves that Six Feet Under's biggest problem is sometimes the band but not always.

Crypt of the Devil sounds like buttered pasta without butter.

Graveyard Classics IV is the closest thing we have had to intergalactic space travel. If every single Judas Priest and Iron Maiden song sounded exactly like this it'd be an instant improvet. There is literally no album nor song by either band that can even hold a candle to a single one of these covers. The raw emotion pouring out from Chris Barnes is some of the most awe inspiring stuff ever committed to recording. Every single moment of this album is like a star going super nova. This is the very definition of quality and excellence in the performing arts.

Torment? More like Borement GOT EM.

Nightmares of the Decomposed is without a doubt a modern master piece. The foundations of all art moving forward should be based on this album. I feel unworthy to even speak of such an album. This was crafted in the forges of stars far beyond the reaches of magnified human sight. The inescapable quality of this record is the mark of the new bar for the future. With state of the art death metal vocals and the latest in heavy as fuck technology, Nightmares of the Decomposed will usher in an age of enlightenment beyond all things that could ever be conceived by man. Any album put against this titan of the future will falter in the rays of victory that shine off its death metal coat. The modern man simply is not complete without this album in his collection. (Results may vary).

Killing For Revenge is indescribable. This album sounds like nothing. I hate doing this but like literally so much of their discography sounds like absolutely nothing. I can not remember a single moment from this album. I am sorry. This is corn flakes the musical.

Next to Die is just boring to me. I am sorry it has nothing going for it. I was hoping for ANYTHING to say about it. It's just sparkling water death metal. Nothing unique, not heavy. The vocal performance is cool though. However I just find this to be one of the least interesting albums actually in this line up. This is probably the most disappointed I have been the entire time.

It took me a month and a half or so to go through this stuff because I had to take breaks. I find it very exhausting to listen to mediocre albums. Six Feet Under proves one thing right for sure however. That a bad album is better than a boring one. This band basically went all over the map with quality. Some genuinely good stuff like Haunted, Maximum Violence, and Unborn. This band has had some good output but overall the verdict I think is clear. This band overall has had a career of playing it very safe. A career of what I feel to be one mired in mediocrity. A career that shows very plainly, just because you have veteran status does not mean you know what is up. Chris Barnes for what it is worth if this passes by you. I want you to know one thing. I think you are actually very inspiring as a matter of fact this is why I went through and did this run. I genuinely think you are a great case of doing what you love in the face of people like me. People like you who do what you do despite what anyone thinks of you is an admirable quality and can not be understated because you absolutely have a career to be proud of more than most. So to Six Feet Under and Chris Barnes, keep it fuckin metal brothers! To all of you dear readers, thank you for taking the time to listen to this no one ramble. Until next time keep it brutal!

Japanese Metal Attack

When discussing metal we often bring up the greatness of the western bands. Stuff like Black Sabbath, Cannibal Corpse, or even Mayhem. However, few talk about our brothers from the east. The land where the sun never sets, Japan. This little unassuming island filled with what seems to be tight assed salary men and an overly formal populace hides a hideous secret. Some of the most insane and cutting edge metal and punk has been born in Japan. The first band I would like to bring up is the mighty Sabbath, this band who takes what Venom was doing and injects some of the speed and fire of traditional heavy metal. Letting more guitar work flourish throughout the album. This band would go on to become one of the biggest metal acts from Japan. Starting with Envenom which is an album that has a sound not found even within the bands own discography I'd argue. Perfectly blending the technical prowess of bands like Priest of Maiden with the speed and darkness of a lightning bolt in the void. This record is a bulldozer busting down your walls. Of course you also have great bands like Gotsu-Totsu-Kotsu offering their unique brand of death metal that flows with inspiration from the country's history. Focusing on samurai history and folklore specifically.

However my favorite bands from Japan actually tend to be the less extreme bands such as Gorgon and Metlucifer. These bands showcase exactly what makes Japanese metal so unique in the metal sphere. The rhythmic and emotional depth is something often not found in western forms of traditional heavy metal. These guys really clung to the idea of what heavy metal was back in the 80s and embraced it perfectly and have been pumping out consistently interesting and quality heavy metal at the same time we'd see Priest put away the leather and embrace their mid life crisis'. However there is one band who has been kicking ass along the greats nearly as long as the greats, that band being the epic Loudness. No band can claim cred like Loudness, being one of the few bands that I can safely say stands the test against the biggest bands that metal has to offer. Their first album The Birthday Eve dropped in the year 1981, leaving not just the Japanese audience's jaws on the floor but the entire world. Taking glam metal and injecting the very flare and style that would lead to the Japanese setting themselves apart from the rest of the world.

If you want the most extreme example of the Japanese setting themselves apart musically from the rest of the metal community then look no farther than G.I.S.M. a band that has been down every street in the metal sound. This band started out as a punk band with Detestation featuring some of the wildest and outlandish guitar and vocal performances on any record I have ever heard. From riffs that sound like they belong anywhere other than on a punk record to vocals that at times almost sound like yodeling in pain, this album takes you down some dark avenues. However as the band would move throughout the years their sound changed dramatically from record to record some of them genuinely sounding like traditional heavy metal. This change can be heard on the record M.A.N.(Military Affairs Neurotic) where they take a much more obvious swing at heavy metal composition mainly in terms of the instrumentals. Vocally this is still just as unhinged as any of their other releases.

This is just scratching the surface of Japanese metal. There are too many for me to truly go into detail on. We'd be here all day. However, I urge you to take some time and seriously explore the vibrant metal scene found on this island of sunlight and honor. The creativity and passion of the people of Japan can be heard ringing through Marshall stacks and P.A. systems in underground bars and venues all over the country. The sprawling tapestry that awaits the curious listener will lead to a cornucopia of new bands and techniques that may inspire you to look outside of your own musical box just a little bit more. To get you started here are some honorable mentions for you to check out.

Transgressor- Ether for Scapegoat, a death metal master piece featuring some impeccable riff work.

Coffins- Mortuary in Darkness, one of the prime death doom albums from Japan nasty and raw!

Abigail- Intercourse and Lust, an unhinged black thrash album that was crafted by the masters of insanity themselves. I highly recommend it!

No Point in Living- The Cold Night, DSBM from Japan this is actually a pretty soul crushing listen and genuinely is one of my favorite releases in DSBM the atmosphere and artistry on display here is fantastic.

GO FORTH DIE FOR JAPANESE METAL ATTACK!!!! KILL TIL DIE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!