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ONCE AGAIN, HERE'S OUR MONTHLY DELUGE OF ALL THINGS DEATH METAL BROUGHT TO YOU BY OUR RESIDENT CONNOISSEUR...

Words: Olivier 'Zoltar' Badin



PUTRID OFFAL



Until now, **Putrid Offal** were nothing but a footprint in the history book, at best. With an initial lifespan of only three years with just one demo and two splits (one with mincore legends Agathocles and the other one with the long forgotten Exulceration from Switzerland), at best they were remembered by a handful as the only proper French Carcass devotees that briefly featured Ludovic Loez from Supuration on drums, and had the luxury to be part of the very first CD release put out by cult label Adipocere back in 1992. Yet in retrospect,

they nevertheless symbolise all the turmoil the death metal genre has gone through since its inception, starting in a smelly garage on a boombox and then exploding a few years later worldwide before facing a huge identity crisis, only to come back to life at the turn of the century stronger than ever. When you ask their guitarist and vocalist Franck Peiffer about their shift to a much more industrial sound in the mid-'90s and the subsequent change name (to M. Pheral) that occurred, he doesn't dodge the bullet: "After we had lost our second drummer due to musical differences, we decided not to look for a replacement but to use machines instead. By that time we had already thought of tapping into different and more diverse territories and that decision only pushed more in that direction. But we never forgot about Putrid Offal, the band was just put to sleep for, well, a very long time."

Quite an understatement, considering the recently unleashed double CD 'Premature Necropsy: The Carnage Continues' is their first sign of life in over twenty years. Compiling all their old material plus brand new versions of thirteen of those oldies plus two special covers (S.O.D. and Nerve). Ironically considering their past history, the later was recorded with a drum machine "out of necessity" but since then, Dehuman's Laye Louhenapessy has recently filled this void and the band are set to make their return on stage at a few selected festivals this summer, including Obscene Extreme and Fall Of Summer before releasing their second album, already said to once again see them festering in gore and the early grind/death sound of yore.

Talking of endless suspense, it 'only' took Swedish powerhouse **Wombath** 22 bloody years to come up with a follow-up to 'Infernal Caustic Torments', their so far sole album. Yes, there was this weird stopgap EP called 'Lavatory' released in '94 with its, erm, superb artwork of a toilet seat decorated with a bottle of champagne, a candle and some flowers (don't ask) but even their guitarist – and these days sole original member – Håkan Stuvemark is so embarrassed about it that he doesn't count it as part of their discography. After the band split, he focused on a more melodic style with In Thy Dreams but after two albums, that ended too after two of their members decided to give priority to Carnal Forge. After a first attempted reunion of the original Wombath line-up in 2005 for an anniversary show in their hometown of Sala that "soon ran out in the sand", it was the official reissue of 'Infernal Caustic Torments' in 2013 that really reignited the fire, after he had decided to re-record a new version of 'Silent As The Grave' for it, re-titled '2013: Silence Unveiled' for the occasion. Stuvemark set out then to write a whole new album, with the assistance of their original bass player on one song, and asked his friend Jonny Petterson, with whom he had played with in Skineater, to join on vocals and bass. The resulting full-



length 'Downfall Rising' (due to hit the stores this summer) was mixed by US drummer The Absence's Jeramie Kling, who also ended up playing on it. Since then a full Swedish line-up has been recruited – at least, kind of, as Petterson and Alex Riglin (guitar) are for the time being living in Bristol. "It's not a big deal as it's quite easy and cheap to fly these days. Plus we're not the kind of band that rehearse very often. We know what we are doing and do it very well when all together!" The irony is that if, with time, Wombath was lumped into the whole Swedish death metal movement, truth is that 'Infernal Caustic Torments' was way more influenced by the UK and US scenes, with Malevolent Creation's 'Retribution' being one of their role models. Yet its successor is a full-on HM-2 celebration, as Stuvemark admits that the sound of the emblematic effect pedal with all its buttons pushed to the max gives this lifelong Entombed fan "goosebumps". Guess that, just like Putrid Offal, it tends to prove that death metal, well, never truly dies, at least in some people's hearts.

If you're an underground fan up-to-date of what's currently happening in the death metal world, chances are you've fallen under the spell of more than a few Chilean bands lately. Unausprechlichen Kulten, Magnanimus, Demonic Rage or Putrid Evocation are just some of the many demons that have lately taken the genre back to its natural, moist and decayed habitat with no consideration of anything remotely melodic nor commercial. Like most of them, Santiago's **Praise The Flame** are a classic power-trio proud of their old-school roots. As a matter of fact, their drummer actually had the privilege



WOMBATH

to join the country's oldest DM act, Death Yell, three years ago. But in PTF, the one pulling the strings here (literally) is their guitarist and vocalist JJ who's so proud of his creation that he labels himself as satanic, hence its name, "both as a reference to our inner fire and that one flame that allows us not to live our life blindfolded and to Lucifer, the Transgressor and source of our inner strength." Apart from an upcoming split with Abrekadaver, they've put out only one demo during their first three years as a band but such was the quality of 'Profane Cult' that it was quickly re-issued on LP, CD and tape nevertheless. "I don't see Praise The Flame as an old-school death metal

band simply because we didn't start in the late '80s," says JJ. "However, our sound is directly influenced by our elders from that special era and we add more atmosphere, darkness and put our own twist on it." Often described as Vader meets early Morbid Angel, they've added a second guitar player to their line-up, just in time to record their first proper album 'Manifest Rebellion', set to be released next September through Memento Mori records and described by JJ as "nine songs of violent, dark and venomous death metal." In a nutshell, it should be a good representation of why in 2015, the Chilean underground rules all in South America. ☺

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PRAYE THE FLAME