

HEADBANGER'S WALL



**NORMA JEAN
POLAR SIMILAR**
SOLID STATE RECORDS

Polar Similar is a reminder that *Norma Jean* is anything but rudimentary. "Sonically, we hoped to open minds to something different," explains lead singer **Cory Brandan**. "We pushed ourselves really hard to be something else." Decisions like recording at Pachyderm Studio (the same studio where Nirvana recorded *In Utero*) in Minnesota proves it. Each morning the band walked from the cabin to the backyard studio, turned on *The Shining*, Stanley Kubrick's isolation-themed thriller, and used the space's legendary acoustics to record audio that would end up so powerfully raw, it would need no added effects. From the track "Everyone Talking Over Everyone Else", an anthem about clawing yourself out of the cave of abusive relationships, to the song "A Thousand Years A Minute", which looks inside self-harm, to "Reaction", a song dealing with the struggle to reach victims, *Polar Similar* exposes — honestly and powerfully — the varied perspectives of relational abuse.



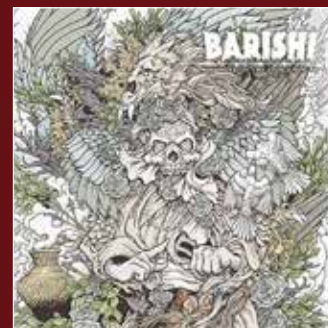
**BRUJERIA
POCHO AZTLAN**
NUCLEAR BLAST

Brujeria emerged from the sunbaked hellscape of Los Angeles in 1989. Led by lyricist and mastermind **Juan Brujo**, *Brujeria* were alternately rumored to be satanic drug lords and members of well-established metal bands. The truth, as always, lays somewhere in between. Fast forward to right about now: *Pocho Aztlan* is *Brujeria*'s first new album in 16 years. The title translates to *Wasted Promised Land*, a combination of Aztlan, the fabled ancestral home of the Aztecs, and the term *pochos*, which native Mexicans use to refer - not always kindly - to a man caught between two worlds. Many *pochos* are not exactly accepted with open arms in Mexico. Meanwhile, they're too often regarded as second-class citizens in the U.S. Brujo has transcended both scenarios through the power of grindcore and death metal. His all-Spanish lyrics telling tales from the frontlines of the drug war, the racial divide, and the battle for the border.



**ALTER BRIDGE
THE LAST HERO**
CAROLINE

Heroes push us to excel. Their will, courage, and sacrifice can bring out the best in the world around them. Fittingly, on their fifth full-length album, *The Last Hero*, hard rock juggernaut *Alter Bridge* pursue a level of excellence inspired by timeless heroism. Making the record became something of a personal quest for the quartet—Myles Kennedy [vocals, guitar], Mark Tremonti [guitar, vocals], Brian Marshall [bass], and Scott Phillips [drums]. *Alter Bridge* is a band known for blurring the line between hard rock and heavy metal. *The Last Hero* marks a creative high-point for the quartet, exploring styles and musical influences from throughout the band's history. From the first notes of opener 'Show Me A Leader' to the final notes of the title track 'The Last Hero,' it's clear *Alter Bridge* are back with their most complete musical work to date.



**BARISHI
BLOOD FROM THE LION'S MOUTH**
SEASON OF MIST

In a scene that has become largely repetitive, nostalgia driven, and prone to navel gazing, few bands stand out as breaking new ground. With their sophomore full-length *Blood from the Lion's Mouth*, *Barishi* demonstrate that it is still possible to challenge the established formulas of the metal genre by recombining its musical DNA. There is an undeniable progressive undertone in their modern approach to hard guitar based music, but at the same time, the Americans delve into the darker side of extreme sound that defies the happy fret-fingering all too often employed by their peers. This album will not give away its treasures at a superficial glance but demands to be given time to grow. *Barishi* provide the listener with earth-shattering grooves and savage vocals born in the verdant mountains of Vermont. Prepare to be pounded on and thunderstruck with ecstatic metal from the ancient hills of New England.

2016 • OCTOBER • 2016



**TRAP THEM
CROWN FERAL**
PROSTHETIC RECORDS

Trap Them didn't form in 2002. They simply cracked the hostile cocoon into something more than an idea. It became a living, breathing monster, deadset on distortion. Founding members Brian Izzi and Ryan McKenney gave themselves no guidelines, no pre-conceived delusions of takeover, no aspirations of success. They wanted to create music and they wanted it to damage. They wanted to make to make it ugly and bitter. *Crown Feral* marks *Trap Them*'s venomous return. *Crown Feral* is an album by a band at their ferocious peak - perfectly balanced and crafted with a tension and an anger that is *Trap Them* at their best. The band's fifth full-length was once again recorded with longtime friend and collaborator Kurt Ballou (Converge, Skeletonwitch) at GodCity Studio in Salem, Mass., and follows the 2014 release of "Blissfucker," which *Revolver* called their "most dangerous declaration to date".



**AURAS
HELIOSPECTRUM**
EONE MUSIC

Auras come from a soil rich with heavy music innovation - Canada! *Heliospectrum* is the first full-length offering from the Canadian upstarts, produced by Anthony Calabretta (Stereos, Abandon All Ships), with engineering/editing by Cameron McLellan (Protest The Hero, Intervals). It's the inevitable culmination of years spent perfecting their sonic alchemy in basements, clubs, theaters and rehearsal rooms, honing a juxtaposition of unrelenting heaviness, complex riffery and ambiance. The band's debut full length is also the result of disciplined dedication and focused collaboration. "Chronos Fear" showcases the relentless riffing and intricate rhythms: *Auras* bring to the table, sublimely enhanced by nuanced modulation and craft. Lyrically, "Chronos Fear" meditates on the unpredictability of time and future events. It's thematically not unlike the band's music, which includes curveballs that are integral to their sound. Hold onto the grooves, because the musical ground will always move.



**GORGUTS
PLEIADES' DUST**
SEASON OF MIST

Few extreme bands can boast the pedigree of *Gorguts*. During their early days as part of death metal's first wave, they created a legacy of legendary releases including their debut album *Considered Dead* (1991) and its more experimental and technical follow-up *Erosion of Sanity* (1993). Now *Gorguts* are back with a mind-blowing EP, *Pleiades' Dust*. "We have been looking forward a long time to share this new journey into uncharted musical territory with you," says *Gorguts* mastermind Luc Lemay. "I could hardly be more proud of this ambitious composition. The theme of a long forgotten library makes a story of beauty and fascination. I like to see this work as a tribute to those great minds of an ancient civilization, their books and history. These three items have long held my own curiosity and interest for many years. I hope you enjoy this."



**AURAS
HELIOSPECTRUM**
EONE MUSIC

Breathe In The Water is frontloaded with the type of impassioned vocals that erupt from the depths of the gut, unforgettable blues-soaked riffs, and pulverizing rhythmic clap. Driven by frontman/guitarist Eddie Veliz, *Kyng* features drummer Pepe Clarke Magana and bassist Tony Castaneda. They take a no-nonsense approach to music: free of pretense, studio trickery and gimmicks. The result is a collection of songs that is real and raw, addressing themes of anger, loss and desperation. Original cover artwork by Conor Nolan reflects topics running throughout the album. Brian Blickle (Baroness) and Zach Blair (Rise Against) are guest collaborators. "We were finally able to create a record that had zero stigmas to appease the industry. Every song on this record came from the depth of what *Kyng* truly is as a band. This album is far beyond anything that we have done in the past. Some of my best work resides in *Breathe In The Water*," says Veliz.

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HEADBANGER'S WALL



KNOCKED LOOSE LAUGH TRACKS PURE NOISE RECORD

Named one of Alternative Press' "16 Bands To Watch in 2016" Kentucky's **Knocked Loose** is on track to takeover underground hardcore this year with one of the most intensely delivered records in recent memory. The band's debut, *Laugh Tracks*, features 11 catastrophic tracks, as witnessed with "Deadringer" that bleed with unfiltered passion and precise rage. "*Laugh Tracks* is a long time coming for **Knocked Loose**, a new chapter so to speak," says Bryan Garris. "A project we all equally put time into, something we are extremely proud of. We hope you enjoy it." Says *Metal Injection*: "From top to bottom, you can tell that this is a **Knocked Loose** record through and through. The record is full of bangers such as "Oblivions Peak" and "Billy No Mates"... but their songwriting as a whole has definitely become more developed with a lot more leads and fillers behind riffs to make their songs sound much more full."



OPETH SORCRESS NUCLEAR BLAST

An unstoppable force for uniqueness amid a sea of generic swill, **Opeth** have been setting the rulebook ablaze and ploughing a uniquely progressive and exploratory furrow for nearly 25 years now. Formed in Stockholm in 1990, the band led by singer, guitarist and songwriter Mikael Åkerfeldt began life as maverick and honorary members of the then flourishing Swedish death metal scene, but from their earliest recordings onwards this band have neither conformed nor exhibited any desire to be restricted to a single genre. Instinctively brave and effortlessly mysterious, **Opeth** could be superficially described as "progressive death metal," but are plainly much more, as their amazing run of albums plainly attests. *Sorceress* is proof that Åkerfeldt has a near-endless well of greatness inside. **Opeth's** twelfth full-length is an unparalleled adventure, where visions cleverly and secretly change, colors mute as if weathered by time, and sounds challenge profoundly.



MESHUGGAH THE VIOLENT SLEEP OF REASON NUCLEAR BLAST

In 2017, Swedish progressive metal pioneers **Meshuggah** will be entering their 30th year of existence, defying expectations on record as to the limitations of metal, and then proving their virtuosic prowess by taking their cathedral-complex compositions to stages all over the world. The **Meshuggah** legend was established through the likes of 1995's groundbreaking *Destroy Erase Improve* and the band's third record, 1998's *Chaosphere*. 2012's immense *Koloss* solidified the band's reputation as creative mavericks raising the reputation of what metal could be, resulting in status as the creators and godfathers of an entire progressive music style known as djent. *The Violent Sleep of Reason*, the band's eighth full-length studio album, finds **Meshuggah** building upon their legacy but also recapturing some of the magic and excitement specifically within the aspect of performance, finding flow and groove that would be a challenge for any lesser band to locate, given such technical geometric madness at mischievous hand.



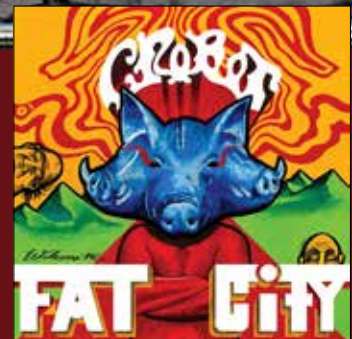
SONATA ARCTICA THE NINTH HOUR NUCLEAR BLAST

Fans know that **Sonata Arctica** constantly deliver their high quality sound, but are also up for a little surprise here and there, hence every one of the band's 8th full-length releases carried its own charm that always added a fresh new touch to the genre. Therefore the ever-active quintet rarely finds time to breathe and once again: it only took them less than two years to produce the follow-up to their last hit album, their new brainchild, *The Ninth Hour*. Just like their last two releases, *The Ninth Hour* gives the listener food for thought due to its thoughtful lyrical and visual content. After a North American tour plus many headline shows around the globe, the band was able to take a close look at the entire world as it is at the moment — on the edge of a possible Armageddon. Sounds like a party.



EXPIRE WITH REGRET BRIDGE 9

Expire return with their third full-length, *With Regret*. A little heavier and just as fierce as ever, the Midwest Blood champions cruise across sub-two-minute juggernauts purging their feelings on damaged relationships and introspective exorcisms. *With Regret* is the first **Expire** album recorded outside of their mainstay studio, Howl Street, having traveled up to Chicago's Bricktop Studios with Andy Nelson. The new environment takes them out of their comfort zone and results in subtle new twists to the band's sound, which bounces with a caustic, fraught anxiety, more memorable riffs, and focused vocals that retain all their previous bile and despair. In support of *With Regret*, **Expire** canvas North America with *Stick To Your Guns*, *Stray From The Path*, and *Knocked Loose*.



CROBOT WELCOME TO FAT CITY WIND-UP

In 1970, Hunter S. Thompson infamously campaigned to be elected Sheriff of Aspen. He proposed that the snowy locale's name be changed to "Fat City" in order to, "prevent greedheads, land-rapers and other human jackals from capitalizing on the name 'Aspen.'" He lost the election, but a short 46 years later, his proposed moniker would perfectly suit **Crobot's** second full-length album, *Welcome To Fat City*. Stirring up down 'n' dirty rock 'n' roll, swaggering blues, doom-metal, and strangely sexy funk into a grimy cauldron, the Pennsylvania quartet—Brandon Yeagley [lead vocals, harmonica], Chris Bishop [guitar, vocals], Jake Figueroa [bass], and Paul Figueroa [drums]—make rock music gonzo again by blasting it to outer space... "That set the tone, and it established the spectrum for what would become *Welcome To Fat City*," admits Brandon. It's heavier. It's funkier. It's bluesier. There are so many grooves and big moments. We're maturing as songwriters and looking at things from a new perspective."