

PROSSES

### Opiate For The Masses *Manifesto* WARCON

the revolution." It's more than a chorus lyric on the opening track of the Masses sophomore release calling for fans to follow as their personal charge in an industry with cookie cutter bands each with less than unique part to bring current musical trends. Offering a twist to an otherwise bland scene, *Manifesto*, the follow up to 2005's *The* blatant in its imagery, sound more than its predecessor. The result is an eclectic mix of songwriting that is more polished Opiate.

the urgency of a ticking "21st Bomb," *Manifesto* immediately listeners into heavy beats, metal rhythmic refrains, the likes of which any militaristic sound to the music. "On," "Away" and the title track highlights of the albums heavier on the floor double bass" drums throughout "Manifesto," and choral "is is your manifesto," are haunting leaving the song in your head well track, a cover of Portishead's "Star."

is not heavy however. Amidst the tracks are also slower offerings "Goodbye" and "Black Book."

ate for the Masses songs are multi-faceted, not too busy or distracting to the vocals, instruments and programming to the edge, offerings like "Dead Underground" (previously in the *Saw 3* soundtrack) act as slower and heavier, very melodic their own sounds. Closing "Push," OFM are literally new songwriting height, penning a minute song that challenges the tracks for the title of best.

the Masses cannot be mistaken for bands receiving large commercial success. It is clear that they have matured in their song writing ability over the years and the tracks work individually and in time adding to the collective. *Manifesto* proves that when all the current is dead, they'll still be ticking like a time bomb waiting to explode on the people.

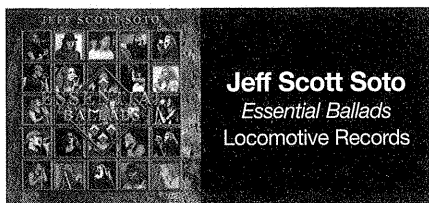
how you ingest this opiate, it's anything but relaxing. It's a musical set to rock beats, industrial synths and powerful vocals sure to take you from beginning to end.

organo



### Various Artists *Our Impact Will Be Felt* Abacus Records

Slowly becoming the be-all label for finding slam-worthy hardcore and metalcore, Abacus Records gives us a compilation that celebrates 20 years of the band Sick Of It All. This tribute takes some of the hottest talent in the genre and has them bring to life their own version of SOIA classics. The idea works for a number of reasons—as not only do you hear the hot bands of today, but you also get the chance to learn more about these forefathers of the hardcore movement. It's a great sampling of a wide variety of groups.



### Jeff Scott Soto *Essential Ballads* Locomotive Records

Hey, headbanger—what's your guilty pleasure? Michael Bolton? Celine Dion or Luther Vandross? Or do you live on a straight diet of metal, eschewing slow, melodic music that touches on topics like falling in love or living through the pain of a love lost? Jeff Scott Soto (Yngwie Malmsteen, Soul Sirkus) is not afraid to show his vulnerability and really puts his balls on the block with *Essential Ballads*, a compilation of Soto-written songs with a cover of Journey's "Send Her My Love." A true heavy metal veteran, Soto has nothing to prove, but this album shows that he can write beautiful ballads. "Lonely Shade Of Blue" is the most essential song, but sad enough to make you reminisce, then cry, then drunk-dial your ex.



### Meshuggah *Nothing—Re-master* Nuclear Blast Records

You find little argument about Meshuggah being one of the true innovators in metal, and this re-master of 2002's *Nothing* reminds you why this is the case. Loaded with technical guitar wizardry from Thronedel that gets compounded by the thunderous drumming of Haake, it often leaves you mystified at how such a band could even exist. Add in Kidman's growling presence that commands your attention and they show that they are ever-evolving—and they're proving that metal's tapestry is a continually weaved thing. A bonus live DVD is included which offers visual confirmation of their impact on the genre.



### Fu Manchu *We Must Obey* Century Media Records

The addictive groove and the slamming sound of Fu Manchu provides the ultimate soundtrack and motivational music to blast in your ride at dawn before you arrive at your favorite surf spot. And in the parking lot, *We Must Obey*, the gnarly new album from the explosive Orange County quartet, is blasting out your speakers as the neighborhood dogs bark and the terry cloth-robed housewives start dancing.

The record is a soulful bowlful of stony, electrically crunchy hits that will satisfy any hard rock fan that isn't dead from the neck up. Black Sabbath fans will be drawn to the Geezer/Ward flavor of Fu Manchu's rock bottom as well as the lommi-infused guitar solos, which are painted all over the soundscape of the record. The doom/gloom intro of "Let Me Out" is reminiscent of just about any song Sabbath ever did. Fu Manchu draws upon the sound of the founding fathers of heavy metal, but those fathers' slow-tempo drone may sound a bit sluggish to the trained (or strained) ear compared to some of Fu Manchu's lethal weapons on *We Must Obey*.

It's easy to draw comparisons to Rollins Band and Suicidal Tendencies when the guitars of Scott Hill and Bob Balch combined with the bass of Brad Davis hit your soul. "Knew It All Along" is the best track of the 11 killers on the record, where each member of the dojo showcases their musical mojo, especially drummer Scott Reeder. He beats the hell out of skins with the rudiments of basic timekeeping while adding the right kind of percussive complexity needed to drive the sound of his band. The slamming cover of "Moving In Stereo", which was originally recorded by The Cars, is Fu Manchu's homage to the Boston new wave band. The band relies on guitar, drums, bass, drums, distortion and attitude to get the job done.

*We Must Obey*, Fu Manchu's tenth album, was co-produced by Andrew Alekel (Weezer, Rancid, Queens of the Stone Age) and is the antidote for music that sucks and slowly weakens your immune system. Some bands have survived by perseverance and staying true to their vision, regardless of how they're labeled. But the deciding factor is what kind of music the bands are making. Who wants another Offspring? Stoner rock or surf-punk from Southern California is not in short supply these days. Fu Manchu is the essence of pure rock, no matter how they're classified. Now, obey and give this album a listen.

—Charlie Steffens