

Courtesy of Earalite Records

# Napalm Death LP loses message behind impenetrable wall of noise

By Bryan Peterson  
Staff Reporter

**Napalm Death**  
"From Enslavement to Obliteration"  
Earache Records

I went to this big peace rally in Washington, D.C. a while back. Everyone was really happy and groovy and stuff, and it was a pretty great day.

## album REVIEW

At the end of the day, I experienced something like never before. Tens of thousands of people were gathered and there was an incredible energy, a feeling of togetherness and power.

Toward the end of the ceremony, an aluminum sheet was held up to a microphone. Steel balls were dropped onto the sheet one by one.

There were 50,000 of these little metal balls and each one represented a single nuclear bomb. The first one dropped and an amplified CRACK pierced the ears of the tightly packed

crowd. Then another was dropped, and another.

These sounds were loud and hurt my ears. And they kept coming and filling the air as the balls were poured. SMASH-CRASH-BAM-SMASH-BANG!! Faster and faster they came, and the first hundred had not yet been dropped.

The destruction came faster and faster and soon I could not separate the individual THAKWHAM-BASHes any longer.

They were pouring and pouring, and everything, all noise, all thought, all sound, was wiped out by the endless, tinny roar.

It did not stop. It went on and on and on, and people started to look at the ground and cry. SCRAAAAAAAAAAAAAASHHHHHH it was one continuous roar of destruction, a wave that engulfed every listener and wiped away all passing thoughts.

There was no space, no time. Just an endless blast that filled the world. I tried to turn away, to escape, but there was nowhere to go.

And then it stopped. A couple lagging balls fell and sounded their

lonely CRACKs and then all was silent.

Silent. No one moved, nothing was said. It was utter, unimaginable destruction, experienced firsthand.

People thought and wondered and cried, but our attention had been captured. There was no escape. The crowd had confronted utter destruction, experienced annihilation, known the sound of 50,000 nuclear hands clapping, each person having his or her very essence overwhelmed.

When first listening to the new Napalm Death LP, I thought of that roar.

"From Enslavement to Obliteration" is the punk/speed metal sound taken to the ultimate extreme. It is a ceaseless roar, a cacophony of anger, faster and grungier than ever before.

This album overwhelms the listener, but in a very different way than those 50,000 amplified CRACKs. This is music, albeit angry speedthrash.

Terrifying as they were, I wanted to hear those CRACKs to experience destruction, to know it and to feel it. The songs on this album, cataclysmic as they are, do not grip the listener in the same way.

People have always said that punk bands play too fast and that the lyrics cannot be understood. Anyone who is into the punk thing could make sense of it, especially with the help of a lyric sheet.

But this album has gone too far -- the words are absolutely incomprehensible, coming from a vocalist who grunts and growls like a hyper-speed garbage disposal.

The lyrics are urgent, demanding and aware. The continuum of misery and injustice in the world is displayed while the band roars on.

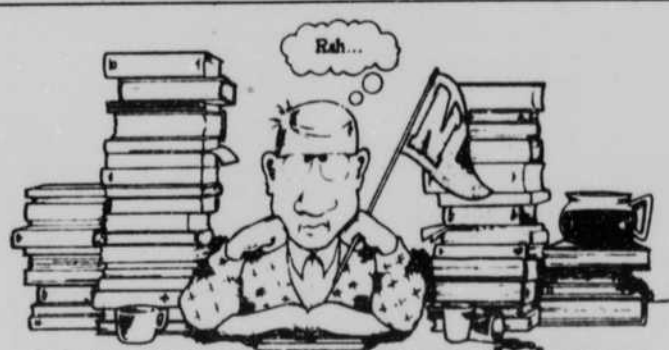
That is the problem: No matter how well-written or compelling these lyrics, they are utterly incomprehensible when sung. This is a total separation between lyrics and music.

There is virtually no point in Napalm Death having a vocalist -- only banshee screeches and guttural growls are present. But the words are printed on the album cover. And these words are challenging.

This album has song after song with provocative words. These songs contain substantial, powerful thoughts about personal and global change, but are lost behind a wall of noise.

Their ideas are powerful, but the message is not communicated through the music. The music is played to reach an end, to produce the fastest and harshest hardcore sounds.

To quote the album's inner notes: "Whirlwind screaming avalanche tornado sandstorm earthquake typhoon tidal wave volcanic eruption brain explosion holocaust rockfall thrash grindcore."



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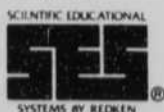
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