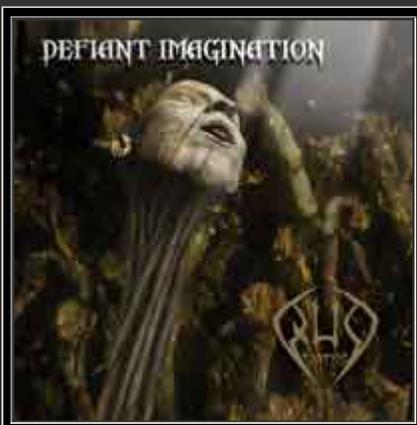




BEST albums of 2004

#1 QUO VADIS - DEFIANT IMAGINATION



Everything from the bass nuances to the abrasive and rasping, yet full vocals make 'Defiant Imagination' worthy of HAILMETAL's album of the year. The riffs tease audiences building climax and developing an anxious feeling to the album. Precise vocal/rhythm synchronization, mechanic guitar tones, with richly melodic in overlays and solos complimented by frantic drumming, deliver melodic death metal in all its might. With a progressive feeling this album truly has something for any range of metal taste. Voted consistently by our staff as being one of the best releases this year, it is an essential album from the 2004 dynasty.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#2 THE CHASM - THE SPELL OF RETRIBUTION



You couldn't listen to this album and tell me you didn't like it – the first track 'From the Curse, A Scourge' will lure you in with its chemically potent, rich melody, conjuring excitement and anticipation. Then whack! Hammering riffs ensue in a dissonant tone creating a very cosmic feel. The Chasm's blackened heritage is ever present with vocals like screeching howls, echoing in the distance appropriately thickening like Attila of Mayhem's, mid-range. Hypnotic, entrancing, thought provoking; a must have for any self-respecting music fan.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#3 ARSIS - A CELEBRATION OF GUILT



With 'A Celebration of Guilt', Arsis offers melodic death metal, with a very different touch. Softened production contrasted with bright, alarming melodies and disheartened lyric entwine to form a refreshing melodic death metal album. A far cry from the Gothenburg sound, a combination of Carcass (Heartwork era), hints of Extol and generally heavily syncopated melodies (making it sound like power metal on speed sometimes) the album is certain to impress the fans of melodic death metal and some of the more open minded thrashers.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#4 EXODUS - TEMPO OF THE DAMNED



Two years after death of Paul Baloff (RIP) Exodus are back with vengeance. Teaming up with, none other then Steve Souza, they've managed to outdo themselves with Tempo Of The Damned, which put simply, is nothing less then a killer thrash release, second only to Bonded By blood and perhaps Fabulous Disaster. Raw production is surely appreciated on this release, with lightning fast and brutal guitar riffs and very enjoyable drumming which in essence retains the old school sick attitude which was there from the very beginning. It quite stands out to anything modern that is thrash these days.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#5 DRUDKH - AUTUMN AURORA



A warm, epic album themed of nature in autumn. Vivid soundscapes of soaring melodies over droning patterns produce breathtaking effects that leave Drudkh proving their uniqueness once again. A real gem of an album that can appeal to just about anyone who can allow music to take them on a journey.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#6 NECROPHAGIST - EPITAPH



Now this album is a gem! very chunky feel with regards to the guitars and still holds that great technical/progressive type feel even moreso than to it's predecessor "Onset Of Putrefaction". This album also sees studio work coming from more than just Muhammed Suicmez, this time around it's a full band and it's a great thing to say that there's no midi drums present on this release!
(even though the midi drums on the last album sounded pretty good, I like the human approach personally) .

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#7 BLOODBATH - NIGHTMARES MADE FLESH



Having Peter Tägtgren (Hypocrisy) on vocals is definitely a great thing. He brings a whole new depth to the music with his growling and screams and suits this band a tad better than Åkerfeldt did. Having said that, I think there are quite some familiarities with the two and fans of Bloodbath's earlier work will love this one as well. In all honesty Peter sounds more devilish and pleasing to the ears. The guitars are so much better now then in the previous release. Every track is choice. An insane death metal release and surely will remain in all our CD players for yonks!

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

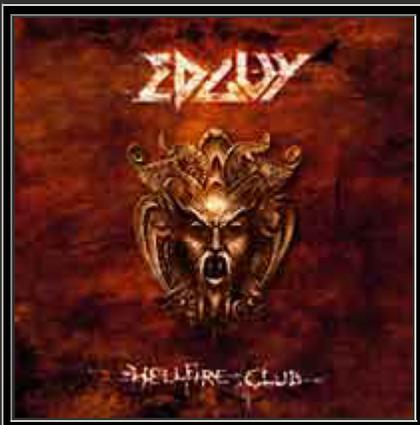
#8 DEATHSPELL OMEGA - SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRES, CIRCUMSPICE



This profound piece of theological blaspheming black metal is a work of utter genius. The strength of the composition and the amount of top-quality riffs, along with the thick, moody production establishes this band even more so as true leaders in their field.

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#9 EDGUY - HELLFIRE CLUB



This album is definitely a change from the past! (nothing negative which is always good). As always the songwriting of Edguy has not ceased to amaze me, although this album has much more a hard rock type feel it is Edguy's signature sound and downright hilarity that makes it unique from many other albums of it's nature, although if the bonus tracks on the King Of Fools EP were added to it, this album would be a 10/10 in my mind (9/10 normally, only losing one point).

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)

#10 DRAGONFORCE - SONIC FIRESTORM



Looking for the fastest melodic power metal? Look no further you found it! Simply put this album is genuinely brilliant! Valley of the Damned? Not even close! Only a handful of power metal albums have impressed me this year and Sonic Firestorm clearly stands on top. A top choice. Herman Li & Sam Totman play with sheer speed like there is no tomorrow. I'm glad this album has creped up to the top 10 because they deserve all the praise they get!

[Official Website](#) | [HM Review](#)