

DEAD AND DIVINE

Matt Tobin – Vocals | Chris LeMasters – Guitar | Kellan Lindsay – Bass | Sebastian Lueth – Guitar | Kelly Bilan – Drums

Like each of their albums before it, Dead and Divine's latest aural assault, *Antimacy*, finds the band one-upping themselves and adding to the body of evidence that proves them as one of the prized acts in an over-crowded and seemingly stagnant genre of heavy music.

Since their 2004 debut EP, *Her Name Was Tragedy*, the Burlington, ON quintet comprised of Chris LeMasters (guitar), Matt Tobin (vocals), Kelly Bilan (drums), Kellan Lindsay (bass) and Sebastian Lueth (guitar) have seen their profile grow steadily at home and abroad thanks to an ever-improving catalogue of releases and punishing live performances.

Antimacy, dropping August 2nd, is unquestionably the pinnacle of their progress to date, taking the staple sounds of their previous output and incorporating a wider variety of outside influence – from the raw aggression of '80s hardcore to the melancholic melodies of '90s alternative. "We grew up listening to a lot of alt-rock – Deftones, Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden... On this album, you can definitely hear that influence," shares LeMasters. "A lot of people caught onto our band early on, so we've only recently grown comfortable really straying from that sound."

Writing for the record began in the spring of 2010 and greatly intensified in the fall. "We had a legitimate sit-down to discuss where we wanted to take this album," begins LeMasters. "We decided to just do what we want – not worry about pleasing anyone, but just write songs that included anything we thought would be exciting." The album isn't so much a departure from their previous material as it is a distillation of the unique and interesting aspects of it.

Tracks like "Grim Love" and opener "Asphyxia Fiend" absolutely explode out of the gates, showcasing plenty of grimy riffage that goes from Black Flag to Beloved and back seamlessly, and both boast choruses featuring Tobin's best sung melodies to date – far surpassing what's typical of the genre thanks to his phrasing and how it intertwines with the tracks.

“Cult/Misleader” incorporates some riot-ready gang vocals and a chorus with some serious swagger, while “Carcinoma” perhaps best represents the album as a whole, offering a sampling of some of the album’s strongest segments in a single song. The band consciously steers clear of clichés like drawn-out breakdowns and cut-and-paste song structures, opting instead to take what the genre’s most heralded acts do well and, in many cases, doing it better.

While debut full-length *The Fanciful* (2008) and follow-up *The Machines We Are* (2009) both benefited from killer production, *Antimacy*, with Jordan Valeriotte at the helm, beautifully balances each member’s input, elevating the record beyond the sum of its parts. “He’s quite young,” says LeMasters about the band’s collaborator, “but we thought it’d pay off to go into the studio with someone with such a fresh perspective.” It did.

Lyricaly, Tobin covers familiar territory, touching on relationships, fate, humanity, and personal struggle, though it’s done with both honesty and humility and often centres around the concept of tolerance and acceptance. Says LeMasters: “We’re painfully honest with our lyrics and music – about how we feel and what we’ve experienced.” It’s that honesty that likely contributes to the band’s connection with their faithful following.

There’s no question any of the 11 songs that comprise *Antimacy* would slay from the stage, and LeMasters & Co. have been thrilled sharing them so far – from major festivals like Heavy MTL and Heavy T.O. to their tours alongside acts like The Chariot, The Bled, and the almighty Hatebreed. With each subsequent show, the band grows sharper and stronger as a live unit. A fall Canadian tour is currently in the works, followed by treks through the US and Europe supporting the release.

“I want these songs to mean something to people – even if it’s just a fraction of what they mean to us,” shares LeMasters, reflecting on his aspirations for *Antimacy*. “We just want to play them for people,” and for *Dead and Divine*, it doesn’t matter if it’s 5 or 500 in front of them, “as long as they fuckin’ bring it – rest assured, we will!”

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