



by Nathan T. Birk

## Take This Torch

**S**o let's put it out there straight away: *Weapon's Drakonian Paradigm* is the *Album Of The Year*. Yes, already. I know I've made similar claims in the past, calling out *Albums Of The Year* early and shit, but my intuitions always serve me well. And such is the case with *Weapon's* highly anticipated debut.

The culmination of time, discipline and a bit of chaos magick, *Drakonian Paradigm* posits a new-look/sound *Weapon* and one that'll likely be most dudes' introduction to the band. Gone is the murk of yesteryear, here replaced by a palatably sober clarity that articulates with deadly precision and passion the band's ancient occult vibrations. The sulfurous fumes still remain, but waft upward and outward from songs that diligently unfold, each patient passage taken to its conclusion and fluidly flowing into the next, the band savoring the composition(s) and exuding class and care for each texture explored. Founding frontman/guitarist *Vetis Monarch's* death-rasp has suitably cleaned up, each expostulation and gesticulation exuding authority, rallying his troops with rough-hewn charisma.

In other words, this is black METAL at its very finest. Oh, and the band? A complete overhaul

from the preceding *Para Bhakti... Salvation 7*", going from one all-star lineup to another: *Lust mainman Sabazios Diabolus* on bass, too long MIA and unfortunately since departed on amicable terms, for personal reasons; ex-*Rites Of Thy Degringolade/Ouroboros* drummer and current *Wamarch* frontman *Paulus Kressman*, here going by the nom de plume *The Disciple* and trading in his chaotic chops of yore for a much subtler but no less fiery performance, once again proving that the man's one of the best drummers in heavy metal; and one *Vileblood Dahcnial*, an otherwise unknown but not for long.

Although *Drakonian Paradigm* was largely written by *Vetis Monarch*, I can't help but think this record could only have come from this lineup. Just listen to those guitar solos, shared by *Vetis* and *Vileblood* — some of the most soulful and evil lead-work you'll ever hear. There truly is magick at work here.

Further words fail me; you simply need to hear *Drakonian Paradigm* in its entirety. It's entirely not the record I was expecting from *Weapon* following said (awesome) 7", but an entirely welcomed creation nevertheless. Time, then, to query *Vetis Monarch* about the genesis of this monumental album.

**Metal Maniacs:** I believe *Vermin* said something like,

"this album will bring the guitar solo back to black metal" ...

**Vetis Monarch:** *Herr Agni "Ve rmin" Nethra* [ex-guitarist, played on the *Para Bhakti... Salvation 7*"]; also of *Axis Of Advance*, now *RIP*] came to my house for a listen the very night we received the master [of *Drakonian Paradigm*] from the studio. I believe his exact words were, "you've officially brought back the guitar solo in black metal."

**MM:** The production on the album's quite different to the murk of the 7"s, but it's actually quite befitting the content. And even though three old songs are rerecorded, the arrangements and execution are almost night and day by comparison.

**VM:** When those songs were first recorded — for example, "Remnants Of A Burnt Mosque" and "Serpentine Ayat" — there was no doubt ever in my mind that if we ever recorded an album, I was going to redo those two tracks and make them even better. Mind you, this was 2004 when these songs were written, so it wasn't a matter of "when," because I had no idea *Weapon* could even continue as a proper band with my chaotic lifestyle. The first EP came out in just a measly 300 copies. I wasn't really happy about it, but I understood — probably only 200 people knew about us. Things

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are quite different now. With the production, basically, I didn't want to cut 'n' paste the songs; I wanted them to become part of the album and not stick out, like "here's a few old songs." So for that reason alone, I spent a lot of time throwing in some [parts] and reducing some, "Remnants. . ." in particular. "Archana," as you know, is a more recent song from the *Para Bhakti...Salvation* EP, so it was approached with even more fire and conviction. If you're going to recreate your art, it better blow the original right out of the water. And that's exactly what we accomplished with *Drakonian Paradigm*.

**MM:** In a way, those two 7"s could be seen as a separate, clearly marked "first era," whereby you established the Weapon sound and got the name out in the underground. Now, we've got a "new era" with *Drakonian Paradigm*, extending that Weapon sound but bringing with it a different focus, more clarity. It's almost like all the legwork Metallica did leading up to *Kill 'Em All*. Sure, you hear the demo songs and recognize it as Metallica, but the first album is this whole entity unto itself, exuding enthusiasm but also finesse, confidence and class that can only come from the hard graft of harnessing one's craft.

**VM:** This is a new era, indeed. I and members of Weapon, past and present, stand by every Weapon release 100 percent. Having said that, it must be pointed out that the crude demo tape, to a slightly lesser extent,

and the two EPs, to a much greater extent, were all, ultimately, treated as "a sign of things to come" — uniting the separation, severing perfect unity, if you will. What is the point of creating music if it doesn't continue



**WEAPON Select Discography**

*Within The Flesh Of*

*The Satanist Demo* — 2003, InCoffin

*Violated Hejab 7"* — 2005, Legion of Death

*Para Bhakti...Salvation 7"* — 2008, FMP

*Drakonian Paradigm* — 2009, Ajna Offensive

to improve with every subsequent release? The gradual process of "realizing" exactly what makes a song a Weapon song has been the most rewarding/exhausting part for me. There's no real sense in being involved in something as personal and holy as this if you don't deliver the absolute best quality of music. Mediocrity has become accepted within black metal — most metal in general — far far too long. I'm not implying that we're the saviors of true black metal, because that is most certainly not our intention; however, we're making it crystal clear that Weapon is above the mundane in every imaginable way.

**MM:** So what did you look for with this new lineup? Obviously, it's been overhauled from that last 7"...

**VM:** I must go back here a little and mention that when the band was first formed, my goal was to keep things fresh with "new blood," but that proved to be a much more daunting task than I could have ever anticipated. On one hand, you have virtuosos who could play circles a round me, but make reference to a Tormentor riff, a MortuaryDrape bassline or an Autopsy drum-fill and they stare at me with confusion like I'm speaking in fucking tongues. Then there are the "goatkvithoof" retardards who have virtually zero musical talent but all the right patches, pins etc. Either way, useless. The trick is to find that "right" balance, thus the lineup being the

way it is.

The last 7" was really a session-member affair. [Ex-bassist] Agni Nethra is the only person who had the potential of being in Weapon for the long haul, but scheduling was an obstacle, so he parted ways with us on the best of terms. This is when Sabazios Diabolus [also of Lust] entered the picture on bass, and things truly started to fall into place for the band's creative pulse. Then, you bring in someone like The Disciple, who is not only a fantastic multi-instrumentalist but on a creative dimension that is nothing short of otherworldly. Last entered my old friend Vileblood Dahncial on lead guitars. The man has stellar control of his axe without ever entering the realm of masturbation. The four of us are devout Satanists, and thus, the Chakra was completed.

**MM:** Could *Drakonian Paradigm* have only come from this lineup?

**VM:** All the songs/lyrics were written by me before these individuals entered the picture, so they certainly had no influence over the writing process. Vileblood Dahncial did contribute some riffs later on which are part of the album, but 99 percent of it was already in place. The execution, however, *had* to be from this lineup. The Disciple and I spent a lot of time together arranging the songs and nuances, and Sabazios Diabolus had significant input on the sonic elements. I don't think this perfection could have been achieved with any other people.

**MM:** The execution, production and certainly songwriting are exceptionally "pro" for a black metal record.

**VM:** Exactly, and that ties in with my point of transcending the mundane. You can create genuinely dark, violent and sinister literature/art/music with finesse without turning into a hipster art-fag. In the late '80s, Mystifier, Mayhem, Samael and Root were all creating *black* metal, yet none of these bands sounded anything alike. And look at all these pioneers' debut records — they sound stellar and "pro." Then, somehow it became ok to rehash third-rate fuzzbox forest-demos over and over. What was once the embodiment of all that is sinister and triumphant got replaced by insecure, prepubescent melancholy; rehearsal pads and Marshall stacks got replaced by bedrooms and downloadable audio software. That hiding-in-the-basement, withdrawn mentality is very alien to us. A Satanist is the conduit of primeval chaos, proudly illuminated, walking the cremation grounds — the path of the adversary. That is what you *feel* when you hear Weapon.

**MM:** So what does "black metal" mean to you?

**VM:** Black metal is Satan, in the simplest of terms. There are countless bands out there now claiming to be black metal, but how many of them are actually living against the tide? How many people will break the chains of hope, shatter the veil of illusion and step beyond their safe realms? Only the



Vetis Monarch

sons of Lucifer are capable of praising His exalted name. Many degenerate losers come here looking to find information on Satanism. But all they will find is mere glimpses, and from very few bands at that. Black metal is inexplicably tied to Satanism, *not* the other way around.

**MM:** But then what about the role of Satanism vs. devil worship vs. blasphemy? Many folks confuse Satanism with devil worship, and more so blasphemy with Satanism, but even at its crudest, most base-level, even blasphemy serves a purpose in shaking up the social order. If people see church burnings, grave desecrations and "Satanic" graffiti and get scared and think there's a "threat" much larger than there actually is, then I totally support blasphemy on a purely surface level. But, too many dudes into "black metal" want to be withdrawn and passive, so...

**VM:** Organized/random violence and so-called blasphemy purely for the sake of it is always encouraged. Everybody has to start somewhere; it's what you do after your humble beginnings that truly matters. People in our age group, late-20s/early-30s, were initially intrigued by *The Satanic Bible* and LP covers of death and black metal bands. Had we left it at that, none of us would have a clue about true Satanism now. As non-Satanic as LaVey's secular text may be, it ignited the Fire within us; then it was up to us, as initiates, to connect the dots, absorb the black energy from different gnostic and religious circles, and thus continue the research deeper, never-ending. I don't claim to be an expert on Satanism — still an initiate, but a learned one. When you dissect the structure on a metaphysical level, devil worship, anti-cosmic Satanism and traditional Luciferianism will all lead to the same glowing diamond. What needs to be asserted, over and over again, is the fact the Satanism is not our platform to "wake up" the alleged fellow man. If people want to go to a church/synagogue/mosque and surrender uncondition-

ally, that's incredibly rewarding for us. The amount of "evil" done in the name of "good" is a most base-level attack on the demiurge, yet it is the first glance at the Black Sun.

**MM:** And yet, that's where so much modern "religious" black metal gets it wrong — that major religions *should* be supported for all the evil "good" they do, for enslaving people who deserve to be enslaved. The original religious BM bands knew this and practiced this.

**VM:** Observation, articulation, expression — these tools are to be utilized to discuss, praise and analyze the great Flame of All. I'll spell it out for the retards: Every real *black* metal band, ultimately, is the same at heart. The original BM bands didn't waste their time thinking about things like "are we religious?" or, "this intro needs to have something in Latin," etc. It's the same with the elite bands today. When we speak of *religious* conviction, it's not metaphoric — it's meant to isolate the depth of our conviction(s). The new so-called "religious"/"orthodox" bands that get it wrong are simply trying — and failing — to plagiarize the works of Malign, Funeral Mist, Deathspell Omega etc. That's all that needs to be said about children and their fantasies.

**MM:** Still, some folks might erroneously lump Weapon in with this "religious" movement even if it's on a completely surface level. I know you've mentioned in the past Bolt Thrower as far as a band that possesses a certain totality — a "complete package," as it were.

**VM:** Bolt Thrower can do no wrong in my book. Add to that Dismember, Autopsy and Mortem, amongst several other DM bands. Their releases continue to develop, never disappoint, and [be] *still* more vicious, passionate and *real* than all the online forum kids' pimple pus combined. We've already received some "backlash" for signing with The Ajna Offensive, who are apparently a Christian label. It's pure comedy. These external factors mean nothing; people can confuse us with whatever they want. We will always do as we please. Weapon is part of no magical orders, no esoteric/occult organizations and no Satanic covens. Our music is direct black magic for us involved and for the initiates who wish to open their minds towards the unknown...

**MM:** That said, what are your expectations for the manner in which *Drakonian Paradigm* will be received, this year and especially beyond?

**VM:** I have a feeling this album will go over a lot of people's heads. We're not playing math metal here, not even close, but challenging elements are not widely accepted by the average BM fan. *Drakonian Paradigm* may end up being a case of no one gets it now and then, six years later, it's all the rage and on and on; history, as you know, repeats itself. As far as I'm concerned, we're just getting started. Weapon will *always* be a pulse of Satanic energy. There are no limits to what we can achieve — the possibilities are endless. [weaponchakra.com]



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