



DEVOURMENT

MIKE MAJEWSKI

I don't know that I would qualify my band as having spiritual significance. Spirituality is a relative term and has different meanings for different people. The purpose of Devourment is strictly for entertainment value, a release from the everyday stresses of life. Our musical take, with our band in particular, is that of pure relentlessness. To me, there is a place for such a band and I would be so bold as to say that no one does it with as much conviction as we do, because we truly believe in our band 110% and it shows. I think anyone will tell you that sometimes they want to pop in a CD from a band that just spews aggression, one that isn't challenging to listen to, just a mood enhancing antidote. Devourment is perfect for this. Am I passionate about my band? Yes. Am I a fan? Yes! So I guess in that regard you can say the band is a spiritual entity in my life, as I put my heart and soul into every aspect of it, from maintaining contact with fans, to making absolutely sure that any music we put out is up to our standards and does not stray from a single fan's expectations of what we do. We are not trying to change the world. We are not trying to push the boundaries of musicianship. We are not trying to put a little melody in your soul. We are trying to be the most extreme form of music that we are capable of creating, and it has certainly struck a chord with a lot of people.

CAPTAIN PISS

Music is quite the phenomenon. It is used for entertainment, for enlightenment, for propaganda, for commercial sales, for instructional materials, to pass time in a waiting room, to put people in the mood to buy things at a store, to put people in the mood to have sex, to dance, to pass the time while driving or riding in a vehicle, to exercise, and used to worship a wide variety of religious and spiritual figures. Music touches only one sense, and therefore you can combine it with other activities. With the advent of portable devices, music can be employed in just about any situation and combined into almost any sort of multitasking amalgamation. One can chose their own music and chose when to listen to music, but one can also be unintentionally exposed to music or garner unforeseen consequences from it. How many times has a television commercial jingle been engrained in your head, repeating in a mental stereo usually reserved for things loved and respected, but now relegated to an ad nauseam version of "Meow, meow, meow, meow..." How many teenagers subconsciously adopt the political and personal stances of the artists whose music compliments the way they feel? My



adolescent mind was exposed to Rage Against The Machine, though that might have eventually worked out in my favor because I got through the "*radically political*" phase of my thinking before it was able to materialize into any sort of true personal philosophy. Does having messages sung or shouted into your ear with enjoyable melody behind it "*make you think*" or think for you? Like with many things of this nature, you can't really determine where choice begins and where influence ends. It's like a drug, did you start taking it because you wanted to or because you were influenced into it? Do you keep taking it because you want to or because you can't stop? And, like drugs, different types of music have different effects on different people.

I was a "*speed*" addict for over half a decade. I listened to nothing but Grindcore, Death Metal, Black Metal, Thrash Metal, Hardcore Punk, as long as the players, most notably, the drummer was going full tilt. If I got the sense that the band was trying to "*keep time*", I'd label it as poseur drivel. I abhorred just about anything that could be heard on the radio, and, in many cases, turned coat on music that I had enjoyed before this period of my life. It literally got to the point where the only music I would play in a CD, tape, record, computer, or MiniDisc player was extremely fast metal, with one or two depressed sludge metal exceptions now and then. If it wasn't fast or distorted, I couldn't be bothered with it, and, after years of this monotony, I realized how numb I had become from it. I think that is the reason why people just stand there and do nothing when they watch a fast or intricately technical band. They've blown out all their veins, the high doesn't come anymore. That, and the fact that it's hard to dance to a blast beat without making a mockery of it, or doing something old school at one-fourth the speed of the music. When, in 2004, I finally crashed and burned out, I curled back my habit, listened to all types of music again, and actually got to the point where a rush would come again when I played my death metal records. I would be able to head bang to something, because, in the past, I was too desensitized to feel enough to move my body. But I had no idea what was taking place in me. I was using fast metal to wake up, get motivated to go through the day, work out, drive places, and go to sleep. When you have that many occasions to use a "*drug*" throughout the day, then you're an addict. Anything that you can become addicted to, outside of exercising or other "*good habits*", is dangerous to be playing around with in the first place. Granted, highs come in different forms.

Death Metal and Grindcore are like pot; you can only get so high on it before you burn out. Black Metal is like meth; evil and dangerous. Metalcore and false Metal are like ephedrine; not strong, but it still ruins your heart. Thrash and regular Heavy Metal are like coke; "*classic*" and sophisticated in a heathen kind of way. Techno is like ecstasy, for obvious reasons, but sometimes it can be like trucker speed. Alternative and mainstream Rock is like GHB; smooth, but ultimately, it causes rape and death, unless you're a twerp who thinks it's the heaviest thing around and uses it like caffeine; a rush for people who haven't exhausted all their options. Pop is like cigarettes, as it is common, ultra-addictive, and gives you nothing after the first few times. Country and classic Rock are like alcohol; grandfathered into wide acceptance, but still maintain that "*fight someone and take home a questionable woman*" edge. New Wave,



The Spiritual Significance Of Music

Disco, Emo, and genres of that nature are like heroin; sweet until you get too far into it, and then you become a waste of flesh. Novelty music is like psychedelics; you never really know what you're going to get, but you know it's going to be "out there". Hip-Hop is like a night where you mix every illegal drug you can get your hands on, and see what happens; sometimes it's retarded, sometimes it's lethal, and sometimes it's pleasurable. Jazz is like prescription pills; considered safe, but it couldn't be farther from the truth. Christian music and easy listening are like chocolate, sugar, and caffeine; the drugs of choice for people who look down on anything the DEA or ATF have to deal with. Commercial jingles and theme songs are like soda pop; light, good tasting, goes down fast, absolutely useless to your mind and body, and solely exists for the purpose of selling more. Some drugs can make you cold, shallow, angry, paranoid, and isolated. Some drugs can kill you inside. Some can make you feel enlightened and awakened to different avenues of thinking. Some can even stimulate your "spiritual" side. It depends on how, and how often you use them, and whether or not you're in it to expand or in it to escape.

When you think about the significance of spirituality in music, you also have to look at what the person making the music, and what the people listening to the music, are seeking to gain. Music has all sorts of applications and purposes. The truth about spirituality in music is that it has different effects for everybody. I think of hippies swaying about at Woodstock, church goers swaying while singing hymns, old ladies swaying to Elton John. I suppose swaying is the most visual way I can tell someone is being spiritually moved by music. That's probably why Metal heads don't sway so much. We bang, whatever that means. Is there spirituality in Metal? Yes, but it usually comes in the form of fire, play around at a distance, but the closer you get, the more likely severe burning will result. There are people in Metal who sing about Satan, old Norse gods, God and Christ; 99.9% of the time negatively, and who sing about evil in general. But how many really believe in it? Most people I know who sing about such things are really nothing more than an atheist. They don't believe in any of it, and use these figures either metaphorically as a statement about something else or just to fit in because that's what everybody else who plays this type of music sings about. Since Metal is, in its essence, black, the opposite of light and goodness, destruction is the natural outcome for having a spiritual investment. That is one of those spirals where cause and effect become interchangeable. People don't often start praising or embracing negativity unless they already have it in their life for one reason or another, but, after they do, then it becomes a non-stop cycle. Most of the people in this type of music don't have anything spiritual in connection with what they're playing or listening to and lead fairly normal lives. It's more a form of entertainment than an actual device to tap into the supernatural.

What I'm talking about now is more on the lyrical and conceptual side of things. What about the most subversive and influential part of music; the rhythms and melodies themselves? That is nearly impossible to analyze. I've intentionally avoided picking up on too much music theory because I didn't want to end up like one of those "Guitar Center guys" who write boring, insipid riffs because all they can think of is how to pull off a technically proficient solo and "jam" with other cover band artistes. Major scales sound happier than



minor scales, and that's about all I can tell you in that particular area. Certain pieces of music, for whatever reason, whether it is the composition of the notes, the atmosphere of the recording, the tone and timbre of the instruments, or something else, can reach out and grab you and stimulate your soul. They can reflect what you are feeling at the time or perhaps even change your mood into something else. I know, on many occasions, I have been assisted out of the doldrums thanks to some well played notes. But where does that come from? I won't even pretend like I can explain it. But it all ties into the fact that different types of influences give different types of responses to different types of people. The feeling and internal stimulus I get out of "*Slit Your Guts*" by Cryptopsy might be the same thing a middle-aged stock broker gets from the Dave Matthews Band. I listen to music to be uplifted and inspired more so than anything, but for me to feel that, I have to listen to the things that best fit with my taste and temperament. Spirituality in music to me is the moment in a song that's so good it's as if God is saying hello to you. If you believe in a higher power, that's a desirable thing to attain. In terms of how significant that makes spirituality in music, though, it's still up in the air.

I think if music is meant to be spiritual then we have pissed off the spirits. We have bastardized, commercialized, and sterilized music throughout the ages. Original members of musical movements have burned out or faded away, nerdlings with nothing more than research of the generations preceding them carrying the torch, oftentimes diluting the original purposes or spirits. Every form of music which started off anti-capitalist has become a sad example of corporate puppetry. Every form of music which started out on one side of the spiritual spectrum has dipped into the other side as well. Every form of music which started off as an expression of youth has shifted into elder-friendly territory. I think when someone grabs something deep and meaningful out of music, it is because they are ignorant to a certain extent, or rather, they are not yet desensitized. There is no quintessential recording to listen to in order to touch the other side. Robert Johnson? The Doors? Judas Priest? Does the Devil, Indian shamans, God, Buddha, Allah, witches and warlocks, and what-have-you exist in certain recordings? Who can say, when it is entirely possible for many people to listen to said recordings and hear nothing, while others can listen to them and become possessed. One thing is for sure: the tunes of instruments will never be entirely sterile, as they always carry something beyond the peaks of the sound frequencies, between the lines of the staff, something intangible and unexplainable. That is fundamentally what makes it more than merely atmospheric noise or speech, what sets it apart into an entity of its own, known simply as "*music*".

MIKE MAJEWSKI & CAPTAIN PISS
VOCALIST & BASSIST IN DEVOURMENT