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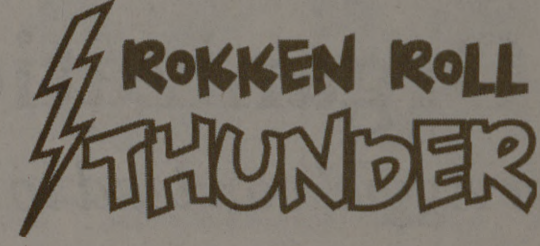
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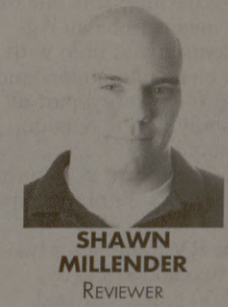
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A BENEFIT FOR MANDI'S MINISTRIES

Sweet release of 'Deth



**Megadeth**  
*"The System Has Failed"*  
 Sanctuary Records



SHAWN MILLENDER  
 REVIEWER

Ever since Metallica went mainstream, then alternative and then nu-metal, the American mainstream metal scene has resembled a Kia dealership; everything there is cheap, mass-produced and is probably going to break down just after the warranty expires.

One reason it's surprising that many Aggies aren't metal fans is because both groups share a fundamental characteristic: resistance to change. Metal fans don't need a breath of fresh air, just want more of what they know and love.

This is why Megadeth's "The System Has Failed" is such a great album.

In 2002, frontman Dave Mustaine (whose resume is probably long and distinguished enough for him to be known as "The Mustaine") retired from Megadeth after 17 years and nine studio albums due to a debilitating arm injury. Doctors said he would never play the guitar again. Such a tragedy is tantamount to Luciano Pavarotti having his larynx ripped out by a feral cat.

Megadeth was, for all intents and purposes, dead in the water. But The Mustaine, being the black belt-owning, born-again-Christian heavy metal Rasputin he is, proved his indestructibility by undergoing intensive physical therapy to return to form on the guitar.

Lance Armstrong? Don't make me laugh. This is the inspirational story of the year.

So The Mustaine was back, but he had no second fiddle. Marty Friedman went off and started an alternative band or fell off the face of the earth or something, so The Mustaine turned to Megadeth's very own prodigal son, Chris Poland.

Poland joined the lineup in time to record on 1985's "Killing is my Business..." and "Peace Sells, But Who's Buying?" in 1986, before leaving the band. He was replaced by Jeff Young on "So Far, So Good, So What?" who gave way to Marty Friedman. Young is sort of the Jake E. Lee of Megadeth.

On this album, Poland helped to return Megadeth to its straight-ahead thrash roots. This album sounds like a mixture of the two that Poland recorded and Friedman's first, "Rust in Peace." It continues in the direction that "The World Needs a Hero" started in, and it sounds little to nothing like more mainstream-friendly releases like "Cryptic Writings," "Youthanasia" or "Countdown to Extinction."

The first track will hit you like Quentin Corryatt did when he delivered "the Hit" on TCU receiver Kyle MacPherson in 1991, without actually breaking your jaw. It sets the tone for an

album rife with heavy riffs, spoken word, quips and anti-government lyrics. In other words, it's almost like every other Megadeth album. Sometime in the mid-1990s, The Mustaine developed a strong affinity for spoken word in the middle of songs. It works sometimes but flat others. It appears on at least three tracks on this album, to varying degrees of effectiveness. "The Scorpion" is a standout track, a metal assault with an extremely catchy chorus. "Tears in a Vial" is almost a power ballad (which has never been suited to The Mustaine's style, as we all saw on the album "Risk"). It follows in the footsteps of "1000 Times Over" and "Almost Honest."

The solos are unconventional, probably due to Poland's fusion background. They are constructed, though, even if they are a departure from earlier material.

Megadeth fans likely want to see The Mustaine, Friedman and Dave Ellefson resurrect the late Gar Samuelson and go on to promote a new release that sounds like "Rust in Peace." Get over it. Metallica is not going to re-record "Master of Puppets" and Slayer's not going to come out with "Seasons in the Abyss II." Turn the page, metal fans. You're stuck in the past worse than most fans. Also, Samuelson didn't play on "Rust in Peace," Nick Menza did.

Then again, most Megadeth fans are so used to seeing the group back together that they'll chase an album composed solely of The Mustaine farting on a snare drum.

In their stead, this new release should satisfy the thirst for quality, well-executed music from a trusted name. The album is like the musical equivalent of "Star Wars Episode III"; The Mustaine made some really great stuff in the past and with all the characters you know and love, you'll feel pretty comfortable knocking down \$15 for it.

This album is well worth the money, especially if you liked "The World Needs a Hero." If you're new to Megadeth, though, get your hands on a copy of "Countdown to Extinction" first.



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