

The gospel according to

# Skinny Puppy

by Andrew M. Duke

**S**kinny puppy, the most (in)famous artist recording for Vancouver's Nettwerk Productions, have released their third complete album, *Cleanse Fold and Manipulate* (Nettwerk/Capitol).

The beast known as Skinny Puppy is the nightmare of Nivek Ogre and Cevin Key, a twisted vocalist/lyricist and synth whiz extraordinaire, respectively. They get their name from the two positive images — "skinny" and "puppy" — which combine to form a negative, sickly image.

Past member Wilhelm Schroeder left to form his own group, Frontline Assembly, and Dwayne Goettel, formerly of Psyche, continues in his place.

Controversy seemed to be the crux of their last album, 1986's *Mind: The Perpetual Intercourse*, and the focus this time is on religion. Ogre's previous question "Is God everything?" has been fleshed out and now takes the form of an abstract look at heaven and hell in "Shadowcast". Ogre mouths many images instead of actually speaking simple prose, which is further complicated by a machine that digitally alters his voice. What appear to be portraits of Jesus Christ appear on the album cover, sleeve, and label. The listener is left ultimately to decide how Ogre feels when left with "Epilogue", the final track, composed of a film sample dealing with the Shroud of Turin.

Other than the new fascination with religion, *Cleanse* provides the Puppy devotee with the usual humour. Elmer Fudd makes a guest appearance on the new "Addiction/Deep Down Trauma Hounds" remix — a big improvement over their last hit, "Stairs and Flowers", which turned into a journey to hip hop hell, atmospherics (the Russian dialogue and ethereal voices of "Draining Faces", along with "Anger" and "the Mourn"), and abrasive, biting dance tracks.

Skinny Puppy have continued their brilliant/notorious use of samples from television, film, music, and life in general. "Burnt with Water" and "Far Too Frail" two earlier tracks, used bits from *The Exorcist* and Ronald Reagan's televised pornography speech, respectively. On *Cleanse*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* provides dialogue and chainsaw roaring for "Shadowcast".

Herein, the socially aware Puppy confronts AIDS ("First Aid", using the albatross from Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and infected infants to illustrate), drug dependency ("Addiction"), and Vietnam from a child's perspective ("Second Tooth").

In terms of style, this album parallels *Mind: T.P.I.*, though continuity has become evident and production is improved. *Cleanse Fold and Manipulate* is nothing groundbreaking, through it still manages to surpass previous offerings.



A Cenobite's hellish experience with hair spray.

# Hallowe'en horror w e e k e n d

by Ian Johnston

**F**or those heading out to a horror movie this weekend, the best advice is to think small: small as in budget, and small as in bugs.

John Carpenter's big-budget *Prince of Darkness* deals with the devil and gooey little critters. The makers of the film would like you to think the movie is a psychic/techno/supernatural thriller with religious connotations, but it is really just a haunted-house vehicle hiding behind a lot of scientific mumbo-jumbo.

What stands for a plot concerns a group of student scientists studying a glowing green sphere in the basement of a deserted church. It's not long before the scientists realize they're dealing with more than special effects.

But do they attempt to leave? Do they attempt to stop it? No. The scientists stand around giving speeches until enough of them are killed off or possessed to stop the remaining few from making a hasty getaway.

Once the premise is set (a good three-quarters of the way through the film), *Prince of Darkness* concentrates on murders of the most grisly type and human reactions of the most insipid.

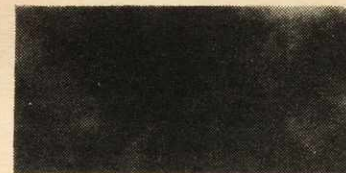
Suffice it to say that *Prince of Darkness* is a bad film hiding behind high production values.

Carpenter should spend this October 31 re-watching his film *Hallowe'en*. Maybe it'll give him a few fresh ideas.

*The Hidden*, unlike *Prince of Darkness*, is a bug movie with heart and a small budget.

It seems a rampaging bug monster is infiltrating human beings, killing them, driving expensive cars, and listening to heavy metal music.

A bad film hiding behind high production values



A bug monster that likes nice cars and heavy metal?

You start to get the impression that director Jack Sholder (who also directed the underrated black comedy *Along in the Dark*) isn't being serious. And, indeed, *The Hidden* contains many moments of inspired lunacy.

Heading the cast is Kyle McLaughlin (*Blue Velvet*) as a

"good" bug alien. He's got a chip on his shoulder (make that his mandible). It seems the bad bug killed his daughter and wife and now he wants revenge.

Michael Nouri plays straight man to the bugs as a detective. His main function in the movie is to look perplexed and to shoot endless shells into the seemingly unstoppable bad bug.

The two actors work well together. As a cross between Starsky and Hutch and Starman, McLaughlin scores the most points as the emotionless alien projecting inner pain beyond a blank expression.

Director Sholder has also paced *The Hidden* at breakneck speed to ensure not much time is allowed for the audience to question the plot.

Speeding this up is a good move since there are several annoying errors in *The Hidden*, many of them inexcusable. But it's all played with such a lighthearted touch and a quick pace, none of it really matters in the end.

Horror fans with a taste for the weird may also want to check out a midnight screening of the new film *Hellraiser*, playing this Friday at the Casino Theatre.

The film is directed by the highly-touted horror writer Clive Barker and comes to town with lots of favourable advance press.



Three happy canines, L-R Dwayne Goettel, Nivek Ogre, Cevin Key.