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John Christ *Flesh Caffeine*

Brian Baker, Contributor

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(Tang Records)

It's been nearly five years since guitarist John Christ packed up all six of his strings and headed for anywhere that Glenn Danzig wasn't. The messy split must have taken an extreme toll on Christ, because he's kept his profile low since turning his back on his nearly nine year career as the shredder of Danzig. Other than the acoustic track "One Song" on Metal Blade's *Guitars That Rule the World II* in 1997, and some session work on an Australian variety show, Christ has been silent.

He's obviously been saving it up for quite a while, and the result is the powerful and potent *Flesh Caffeine*, Christ's first solo album. Christ's wreck Samhain to the dreary goth metal that emanated from Danzig. Christ has often given himself over to sounds and attitudes that were not necessarily his own, preferring to support rather than lead. With *Flesh Caffeine*, Christ finally steps to the forefront and stretches into a hard rocking, but slightly more accessible sonic presentation. Although Christ turns everything up appropriately and occasionally references his old bands in the process, there are plenty of uncharacteristic moments here, particularly the bluesy grind of "Slow Down" and the title track, the swaggering "Talkin' Dirty," and the supple and slashing head rush of "Judgment Day." As heavy as *Flesh Caffeine* plays, both lyrically and musically, there is a delicacy of form and execution that was only hinted at in Christ's Danzig days, accented with flourishes of actual lightness even as it's run through a filter that suggests Metallica, Kings X, and Ted Nugent. The amazing trick here is that John Christ has managed to transcend a form he helped to define, without compromise or dilution. That may be a lesson he learned because of Glenn Danzig, not from him.

(Tang Records, P.O. Box 2713, Santa Clarita, CA 91386-2713, www.johnchrist.com)

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gotta say, when I first got the record, I was thinking it was gonna be a Danzig clone thing... Boy was I wrong! If you're a Danzig fan, you'll probably like this record...if you're not a Danzig fan, you'll love this record! it's got heart & soul and plenty of caffeine....