

## Gig Review of The Dillinger Escape Plan & Poison the Well @ Northampton Roadmender, Wednesday (8th December 2004)

The Northampton Roadmender on a cold Wednesday evening must have felt a million miles away from the sunny climes of Florida, but Poison the Well didn't exhibit any signs of homesickness commanding the stage in front of a multitude of pairs of eagerly listening ears. Their unique brand of melodic hardcore, honed over 7 years of recording, touring, and bloody hard work, was the ideal tonic to the chill outside for the nearly full venue. The 5-piece stormed their way through a number of blasts of collective anger, colluding to generate a viscous but controlled assault on the victims below. And the tools of their crime were used skilfully; menacing growled vocals, heavy yet melodic guitar riffage, and bone-shaking double pedal bass drums all conspiring to inflict grievous bodily harm to maximum effect. If Poison the Well sprung a brutal attack on our senses, then the assault unleashed by The Dillinger Escape Plan was lethal. The five partners in crime began their incendiary performance how they meant to go on; intricate, decisive, and deadly. It is an almost over-whelming experience to see the five individuals explode on stage to their outrageously cacophonous tirade of noise; intimidating vocalist Greg Puciato spins around like a whirlwind in some sort of unhinged post-asylum escape victory dance with screamed rants to match, Ben Weinman throws his guitar about his person at impossible speed and leaps around the stage like Angus Young on hot coals, and Drummer Chris Pennie batters his double bass drums into terrified submission before your sick voyeuristic eyes as Liam Wilson and Brian Benoit inflict similar torture on their bass and guitar. The Dillinger sound is described with difficulty and doesn't fit any conveniently generated musical categories, which is, of course, the main appeal; their music is a category of its own. The thunderous noise is a collection of blastbeats, sledge-hammer heavy guitar riffs, lunatic screaming outbursts, bizarre jazz interludes, and cock-rock solos, all played with the most exacting intricacy. The unconventional time changes take you by surprise and add some clever checkpoints to the controlled chaos (forgive me if that is an oxymoron). The set was a collection of old favourites and new album material. Destroyer's Secret, The Running Board, When Good Dogs do Bad Things, and The Perfect Design all shook the foundations of the Northampton hall. 43% Burnt seared our hearing with furious blastbeats before switching to a peculiar jazz moment, and We are the Storm was thrust directly at us at 100 miles an hour for a couple of minutes before segueing into a dreamy cloud of psychedelia. These examples illustrate the intelligence of the Dillinger approach and what separates them from the throng of other extremity-peddlers out there; using the quieter moments as a tool: the jazz, the trip-outs, the obscene time changes, and in one very effective example, the silence, the impact of the overall storm is nothing short of devastating. At one point in the evening, Greg Puciato pointed out an audience member's t-shirt illustrating a toilet with a huge spike protruding from the centre. 'I wouldn't want to use that toilet', he said. Just like most members of decent society wouldn't want The Dillinger Escape Plan's planet-splitting racket invading their ears. But to those of us who are in on their clever little secret, the reward is satisfying beyond measure. I guess it's just a shame the war they imposed upon our senses was over so quickly, for we were truly shocked and awed.

### About the Author

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