

THE PHOENIX

Dead Child

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From the first monster-metal riff and warlock scream, it's pleasantly obvious where Dead Child are headed on their full-length debut. This is what used to be called the "new wave" of British metal back when Judas Priest and Iron Maiden first took what Black Sabbath had started to its logical conclusion. The only real surprise here is the presence of David Pajo, guitarist of legendary and formative Louisville foursome Slint, and a guy who in recent years has tended more toward cerebral post-rock both with Tortoise and on his own (as Papa M, Aerial M, and just plain Pajo). Hard to say how much irony is at work here: nobody names a song "Never Bet the Devil Your Head" without at least a smirk. But this sort of metal has always had an element of humor to it, even when, as in this case, singer Dahm is channeling Ozzy with lines like "Life is a hideous thing" in the epic "Eye to the Brain," or playing the role of the merciless warlord in "Rattlesnake Chalice." With a CV that includes Stereolab, Royal Trux, and Will Oldham's various Palace incarnations, not to mention backing Billy Corgan in the short-lived Zwan, it sometimes seems that Pajo has done it all. Dead Child remind us that he hasn't quite gotten there yet.



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