

# Music

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## Top live show

### Dead Child

**Empty Bottle; Sat 12**

We are willing to admit that we were initially attracted to the novelty of a metal band that absurdly started off as a Slint side project. Of course, the fact that guitarist Dave Pajo has never chained himself to Slint's cerebral re-boot of rock, and that his Dead Child collaborators Todd Cook and Michael (brother of Slint's Brian) McMahan were reunion tour members of Slint, not founders, does make the novelty less novel.



Which leaves us with the music. Traditionally, the indie rock embrace of metal has either latched onto the extreme inorganic intensity of death/black metal (Flying Luttenbachers) or the opposite stoner-sludge aesthetic (the countless Kyuss/Desert Sessions bands). And on the rare occasion that a band nods toward the more straightforward N.W.O.B.H.M. (New Wave of British Heavy Metal) sounds of Judas Priest or Iron Maiden, it usually is done with a wink (albeit a sincere wink sometimes, as with Dave Grohl's Probot). But the beauty of Dead Child's new *Attack* (Quarterstick Records) is that it is joyously unironic: This album is Venom-ous, Testament-al and Priest-ly without being parody or in-joke. Made up of what we assume are Louisville, Kentucky, scenesters, the group's secret weapon is vocalist Dahm, whose perfect metal phrasing, particularly his Halfordisms on the chorus of "Angel of the Odd," is devil-icious. Also nice is Tony Bailey's drumming, which is relatively low key and straightforward, driving these anthems along rather than showing off.

What it ultimately comes down to is that, while Dead Child might have been in the middle of the pack had it emerged in the '80s, you are certainly not going to bang your head at the Empty Bottle in 2008 to a much better band than this. Indian headlines.

— Jake Austen