



Hazardous Mutation

2005

[Earache Records](#)

OUR RATING - **9** / 10

(4302 views)

[comments \(29\)](#) [\[add\]](#)

In this day and age, the blending of hardcore and metal doesn't really seem like anything new, creative or even interesting, but twenty years ago when thrash and crossover bands blended elements of hardcore punk and heavy metal, it changed the landscape of music forever. The latest combinations of hardcore and metal seem disappointingly light on the "hardcore" as bands simply insert breakdowns into songs to appeal to a fan base of spin-kicking fourteen year olds. The success of Municipal Waste's *Waste 'Em All* album, alongside the popularity of groups like Crucial Unit and Rambo, proved that the faithful were waiting for the return of thrashy punk rock. With their latest album, *Hazardous Mutation*, Municipal Waste has teamed up with Earache Records to produce one of the most palatable, entertaining records the genre has heard in years.

Die-hard fans of Nuclear Assault, Suicidal Tendencies, D.R.I., early Slayer, etc., need read no further: Go buy this album immediately. *Hazardous Mutation* is twenty-five minutes of pure speed metal with a punk rock attitude. The percussion, courtesy of veritable drum-god Dave Witte, is perfect, simple and unassuming. The stars of this show are the guitars, and they never let the listener down. All of the aforementioned bands must wish they could still write riffs this good (if they ever could). Every element of this record, even the cheesy Phantasm sample, fits perfectly into place to create a record that pulls of homage without being a blatant rip-off or pointless nostalgia piece. Municipal Waste has succeeded in proving the continuing relevance of good ol' American thrash in a world increasingly overrun by Swedish influence and mindless chugging. That's not to say that certain moments aren't clearly borrowed, such as the Kerry King solo in "Mind Eraser" or the Tom Araya scream in "Bang Over," but these bits, just like the rest of the record, have been updated, showcasing the timelessness of the style as well as the progression and growth the band has brought to the genre.

Fans of Municipal Waste's previous material may be expecting the band to have upped the ante production-wise for their Earache Records debut, and to a degree, they have; rest assured, however, that they still sound as good as ever, thanks to an impeccable job by Corey Smoot of GWAR. It has all the character of fantastic low-budget recording without the flaws that often accompany it. Every tone and level is just right, but there's also nothing flashy about it. In that sense, it's a perfect fit, and speaks volumes to the musical understanding possessed by the band and Smoot.

Bottom Line: Municipal Waste say it best themselves in the song "Set To Destruct": "We are the speed metal punks. We're the unstoppable force." *Hazardous Mutation* is a slab of fury and attitude, unashamedly embracing the "thrash" moniker like no band has in the last decade. One might be tempted to label Municipal Waste a throwback band and that might be true, but I could certainly deal with more bands that revived the primary metal objectives of getting drunk, getting pissed and tearing it up.