



**THE DIRGE CAROLERS  
WALK LIKE MEN - EP  
Own Label**

Good to see they've got another one out because there's an intelligence burrowing deep into their refined Goth sounds.

'Want' has some craftily sneaky lyrics with unexpected twists and turns behind the neatly luminous guitar and gentrified pace but when they come to record their album I think they need to consider emphasising the vocals a bit more as they're little too quiet in the mix, which isn't a problem in the trickling 'Hoof.' Here we meet a seductive beast and its human dupe, in a discreet piece where guitar, drums and bass play second fiddle to the winsome keyboards and lyrical warning. 'You Scare Too Easily' doesn't hold the same interest, being a lightly queasy tune with thin guitar stretched out across it and too much lyrical repetition, but the bass is nice.

Bands like this always remind me why I like the old school forms of Goth so much, mixing dark themes with a personal take, and there's a rich character about even their slimmest sounds. I also like what they advise in their press release: 'Check them out in clubs and party like it's 1899!'

More on them when I have it.

[www.myspace.com/thedirgecarolers](http://www.myspace.com/thedirgecarolers)

**THE MACHINE IN THE GARDEN  
XV  
Deus Ex Machina**

Now here's a pretty thing, to celebrate their fifteen years together, with a selection of material which isn't simply a chronological selection of already released material, as Roger Fracé and Summer Bowman select an interesting mixture, spice up with a remix here or there, demos and new material.

Kicking off with the brand new and upright 'Mental Wasteland', the guitar cuts through sharply as the vocals perambulate then

nimbly scamper up the melodic cliff face, the lyrical worries finding an opposite in uplifting energies. 'Wonderland' gets the first of Pete Murray's remixes, turning into lean dance shudders, while 'Oblician' adheres to some stern Goth principles woven by circular guitar and a chuntering rhythm, commanding male vocals and a brusque warmth overall. 'Six Days' was apparently left off 'One Winter's Night' and must still be wondering what it did wrong, as it's a bracing, dark slab with a hypnotic pull.

'Mantra' is remixed by the great Ego Likeness, frosted, mellow and then clipping along neatly on buzzy-dance insinuations, swarming hotly, and it's interesting to see how easily their sound can translate into a speedy flow. 'Words In Heaven Lost' comes on like religious Ethereal but descends into some impressive, perilous angst. The original demo of 'Ex Oblivione' was apparently for an HP Lovecraft compilation that never came out but sounds like hedgerow sci-fi initially, organic and bleepy, then fills out into relentless, defiant gloomy pop. 'Dawn' gets the Pete Murray treatment, bringing it in, then out, with a sense of keen optimism and curiosity, the rhythm spry and eddying, like wah-wah from the moon,

The acoustic 'Every Thing She Is' is bliss in surging, strident demo form, and the long forsaken 'Voice' is brilliant, short and snappy, with imperious guitar. 'On The Wire' is a beautiful, still take on an Eldritch song which will surprise many, and it certainly suits a female voice better. 'Nowhere' is a short twinkling idea that slips by in a winsome way, then Their very early 'Walls' is a bit weird, the vocals unsettling, the mood quite open and viscous.

'Corpus Christi' gets a slowly turning dance mix from Matrix that almost sounds like a harsh Pet Shops gone ethereal, which is very strange. 'Otherworld' is a reassuring, uplifting new song that brings this all to a rapturous close.

Fifteen years old, but precociously mature.

[www.tmitg.com](http://www.tmitg.com)  
[www.cdbaby.com/cd/tmitg3](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/tmitg3)

