



# Pure American Metal

Lamb of God a rising metal force

There is a palpable irony surrounding Lamb of God. Last month, the band won the “Best Live Band” award at the U.K.’s Metal Hammer Golden Gods award ceremony. The award, which is basically the U.K.’s version of a Grammy, recognizes the live prowess of the band that refers to themselves as “Pure American Metal,” a mantle they accepted with their 2000 album *New American Gospel*. They, along with Killswitch Engage and Shadows Fall, are first on everyone’s lips when the subject of the “New Wave of American Heavy Metal” comes up. And yet they have not fared so well in their own country. Lamb of God was nominated for a Grammy in 2007 but lost to Slayer, admittedly a hard act to beat. (The nominees for the Grammys’ metal category sure have gotten a lot tougher since 1988’s Jethro Tull fiasco! The Academy must still be trying to atone for that blunder.) Bassist John Campbell says he believes the time for Lamb of God’s recognition in this country is growing near, but being honored with a trifle like a trophy is not important. “We went out there last year [to the Grammy awards]. I took my wife and she got dressed up and did the L.A. thing for the weekend,” he says. “But awards

and ceremonies like that ain’t our thing.”

For over ten years Lamb of God has created ferocious metal with chugging riffs and biting socio-political lyrics. The band has managed to inject groove into their kickass heaviness and has topped the genre’s classic riffage with new levels of complexity. Their latest album, *Sacrament*, is their most experimental yet, atmospheric but still maintaining maximum power. *Sacrament* has what many metalheads demand: massive guitar and drum riffs, pitched vocals that can come out with a growl or a scream and thrashy technical playing.

Lamb of God recently returned from the European metal fest circuit, where Campbell says they played in front of the largest audience they had ever faced — England’s Download Festival, where they played for 75,000 people. Now they’re on the way to the McDonald Theatre, one of the smallest venues for a band of this stature. “A big crowd has a personality all its own,” Campbell says. “But when you’re on stage there’s 15 feet between you and the audience. I’m excited to get back there [to Eugene]. The Northwest is one of my favorite places to play.” **EW**

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