



POLONIUM SERAPHIM

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PREORDER DATE: **Wednesday, March 16, 2016**

RELEASE DATE: **Friday, April 8, 2016**

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Polonium (pre-Austerity Program) releasing 'Seraphim' (stream "Angry")


By Rob Sperry-Franks March 16, 2016 10:00 AM


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Before Justin Foley and Thad Calabrese formed **The Austerity Program**, they had another band in the mid-'90s called **Polonium**. Foley recently revisited that band's material and re-recorded these 20-year-old songs for a new album called *Seraphim*, that's due April 8 via Controlled Burn ([pre-order](#)). Here's what Foley says about it:

“ It probably sounds like bullshit when we tell you that we were pretty isolated living in New York City in 1992. We were. Sure, lower Manhattan was burning with activity – CBGBs, Brownie's, the Mercury Lounge, C-Squat, the Knitting Factory, even the goddam Wetlands – and Brooklyn was just starting to take off. Up in the middle of the Bronx, though, things were dead. Don't get me wrong: hip-hop and merregue poured down Kingsbridge Hill and boomed off the apartment buildings all up and down the Grand Concourse. But for those trying connect to the 90's American Noise Rock Renaissance, Fordham Road was miles and miles away from any of it. That said the two of us – Thad Calabrese and Justin Foley – knew things were different when we brought back a copy of Bolt Thrower's "The IVth Crusade". Having grown up in mid-America, we were smart enough to avoid what we'd encountered of metal in high school. We'd instead filled up our record shelves with nearly anything put out by Dischord, Touch and Go and AmRep. But Bolt Thrower wasn't hair spray or squealy guitar solos. As the relentless double bass drum rained down from the turntable, we knew what we had to do. It didn't really matter that no one would ever hear it. We needed more music like this but didn't know where to find it. So we decided we were the ones to make it. And so we did.

Ahead of the album's release, we're premiering the song "Angry." It's a punishingly heavy, industrially-tinged doom/death that sounds pretty immediate given its old age. You can stream it below.

Polonium won't be playing any live shows behind this release, but the Austerity Program plays pretty often (including with [UXO](#) and [Flipper](#) recently). Stream "Angry," along with the previously-released "Bastard," below.

AUSTERITY PROGRAM PRECURSOR POLONIUM DELIVER A REAL "BASTARD"

February 25, 2016



Noise-rock heroes the Austerity Program formerly existed as **Polonium**, offering a thoroughly punishing take on "obvious antecedents" Big Black, Melvins and Bolt Thrower. It's a dead band, but a good one. *Polonium* is due out on the duo-with-a-drum-machine's own **Controlled Burn Records** April 8. Hear the hammering "Bastard" below.



[Controlled Burn Records](#)
Bastard



METALSUCKS

Exclusive Full Album Stream: *Seraphim* by Polonium (a.k.a. The Austerity Program)

APRIL 4TH, 2016 AT 1:00PM BY METALSUCKS

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Once upon a time, many, many, many years ago, noise rock duo **The Austerity Program** were death metal duo Polonium. Why the shift in aesthetics? No idea. But here we are, decades later, and TAP are finally releasing *Seraphim*, a collection of the material they wrote during their days of Bolt Thrower and Big Black worship. Good news: as it turns out, guitarist/vocalist Justin Foley and bassist Thad Calabrese are just as skilled at producing bludgeoning blasts as they are glorious, Jesus Lizard-esque racket.

Which is why MetalSucks is thrilled to be debuting *Seraphim* on the site today! Check it out below. If you dig it as much as we do, **pre-order** it in advance of its release this Friday, April 8 on **Controlled Burn!**

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"I spent the 12 best years of my life / Behind a desk."

Justin Foley yells those lines at the beginning of Polonium's "Tuberculosis", a second-half highlight on debut full-length *Seraphim*. That said, you don't hear Foley, you hear the character he's inhabiting. On the verge of snapping, the character laments a life, one most likely steered in good conscience, that has amounted to little. And, tick tick tick, time can't be reclaimed.

Over the next five-and-a-half minutes, Foley's guitar, Thad Calabrese's bass, and a drum machine churn, generating a thick rhythmic chop. The tension doesn't dip, it only rises, pounding, pounding, **POUNDING** away. There's no relief. Why would there be? Those enslaved by existential dread are rarely released. Either the dread stops, callused over by resignation, or the afflicted stops; stops trying, stops remembering, stops living.

"And now my youth is gone."

Foley and Calabrese wrote "Tuberculosis" 20 years ago. At the time, they were New York noise rockers looking for a scene. Stuck in a city then uninterested in their exploits, they wouldn't find it. But, luckily, a copy of Bolt Thrower's *The IVth Crusade* found them. The war-obsessed English death metallers were in the process of slowing down, choosing weighty grooves over speedy shredding. "We needed more music like this but didn't know where to find it," Foley writes in Polonium's bio. "So we decided we were the ones to make it. And so we did."

In 1997, Foley and Calabrese settled under the name **the Austerity Program**, soon collecting a small but fervent fan base. Still, they were doomed to see "**Big Black**" in the first paragraph of any write-up, as if years of hard work could be neatly compacted into a single comparison. Of course, there are worse fates, but, as the Austerity Program bridged wave after wave of noise rock with the real thing, it felt like Foley and Calabrese were trying harder than their one-and-done, come-and-go peers. And they just kept getting better. Albums, like 2014's *Beyond Calculation* in particular, were leaps forward, notable for Foley's increasing knack at conveying depth.

In between Austerity Program records, Foley decided to re-record 10 Polonium songs. Not the strangest thing; a lot of artists revisit old material. But the commonality of that track of artistic inspiration hasn't helped answering this reoccurring question: How the hell do you have a conversation with you from 20 years ago? A lot of artists don't, forgetting that time has turned them into different people. Instead of digging up old desires, they overwrite everything with new needs and skill sets. Granted, it's hard to unsolve the problems that produced the creative solutions fundamental to your current makeup. Yet, deep down, the memory must remain, right?

"The goal of Polonium was always simpler than the band that followed it and you can hear it here," Foley writes, "it's music that conveys power." So, spoiler alert, Foley and Calabrese haven't forgotten: the isolation, the find, the feel. But they don't regress, either. *Seraphim* is as much the product of Polonium as it is the Austerity Program. It's powerful. It's nuanced. Sure, it took 20 years. Time wasn't wasted, though.



Controlled Burn Records
Tuberculosis

SOUNDCLOUD



▶ 136

Polonium's *Seraphim* is out 4/8 via **Controlled Burn Recordings**.

SONIC MASALA

One of my all-time favourite EPs - nay, releases - has been *Backsliders & Apostates Will Burn* by New York two-piece [The Austerity Program](#). It probably isn't even their best effort to date - 2014's *Beyond Calculation* was delightfully brutal - but the way in which this four-track behemoth grabbed me by the throat and never let go - it was electrifying, a sensation that doesn't dissipate the more I listen to it.

Now the duo are still in a form of hiatus (well, have sequestered themselves into the bowels of the earth). So in lieu of a new album, it is Sonic Masala's absolute pleasure to be airing for the first time 'Bali Hai', a furious cut from the guys' pre-Austerity project, Polonium. How is this new? Simple really - while writing their new record, the duo went back to the original recordings, some ten years ago, and re-recorded them. In the band's words, Polonium was an idea to be a not serious metal band, then got serious, then not serious again. The vocal howls, the double bass drum attacks, the fucked-up time signatures that have become AP staples, started fermenting and congealing in these moments. And the result is ten track behemoth *Seraphim*, out next month, cross-referencing Bolt Thrower thrashings, Big Business bombast and early Melvins minimalism with seething heat and ground-level anguish - Big Black with busted balls, then. It was originally written by kids in isolation, desperately creating sounds that they themselves couldn't access - now recorded with the brutality and finesse of musicians 20 years their senior (though not necessarily wiser). *Seraphim* sounds out on paper like a curio, a document of an event that only two people witnessed. *Seraphim* plays out like a crossroads purging, an aural snapshot of souls being sold, contracts irrevocably signed in blood, shit and tears of laughter. 'Bali Hai' signs off the record and is typically frenetic and wild (and most like AP) - and seeing as it's also the title of a recent *Better Call Saul* episode, a show whose character arc is foretold (the guy goes to the dark side, regardless of his good intentions) and yet we revel in Saul's struggle with the light and dark parts of his psyche, in both humorous and violent measures - it seems bizarrely apt. Except with Polonium, they turn into The Austerity Program, which is better news for us all. Buy *Seraphim* [here](#).

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Band: Polonium

Album: Seraphim

Labels Controlled Burn Records

Release date: 8 April 2016

Sounds like: Not-serious metal. Bolt Thrower (band) and a Bolt Thrower (the ancient ballistic weapon)

"My time is here to stand and suffer the state, but I am wracked in my pathetic sorrow."

When reading the song titles on Seraphim, you can tell there's a serious amount of dissatisfaction and boiling anger present within Polonium. This is a very good thing. Before The Austerity Program infected the world with their cynicism, guitarist Justin Foley, bassist Thad Calabrese and a drum machine existed as the entity known as Polonium.

Originally started as a not-serious metal band, Polonium were heavily influenced by Coventry's Bolt Thrower, specifically, the album *The IV Crusade*, (and I apologise for linking to a version that sounds like it's been recorded on a Nokia 3210) due to the relentless double-bass drumming and as Justin pointed out to me in an email correspondence, it does sound a bit like a typewriter – very treble-y in places. Seraphim is a collection of the best songs from two sessions around 1993-96, re-recorded in 2013-15 by Foley and serves to bridge the gap between Beyond Calculation and the next Austerity Program record.

There's a sinister amount of callousness poured into the devastating bombardment that thunders forth from *Bastard*, the first track from Seraphim. It's laced with spite, seeping forth like an oozing pustule, loathing and bitterness. The in-human rattle of the drum machine never lets up; it's a rickety, direct and taunt double-bass attack, whilst Foley, (who has steadily been reaching new levels of delirium) is now bellowing the words *"My clothes are soaked with a liquid, the wound on my leg burns with salt..."* as our protagonist is claimed by the ocean, swallowed in the salty, murky depths. There's almost zero-tone to the guitar, which chugs and retches filth riff after filthy riff, letting the spoken-word frenzy take control, alongside the icy and alienating percussion.



The squealing rattle of *Poleface* feels more like a build up than an actual song – the robotic beats growing more impressively despondent and heavier, colliding together like some ghastly montage of a series of road traffic accidents that have all been played together at the same time, metal crunching and reforming into new twisted shapes with each new brutal contact. The bass-thump around the three minute mark is a hypnotic descent into a corrosive world and continues until final exhaustion.

Kids On Top is the most Austerity Program track on Seraphim; showing signs of what is to come for Foley and Calabrese. The rhythmic stop-start pattern sets it apart from the bludgeoning avalanche of the previous tracks, and the noise-trash of the mid-section, completed by the creaking, *Melvins*-esque bass twang is sickeningly good. The creeping dread of *Nebbish* perfectly draws up visions of the song's dark and hostile lyrical content – essentially, that of a man bound and gagged in a basement awaiting his own execution. The way the drum machine creaks and lurches at the beginning from this trickling roll, drawing to mind the captive man's futile struggles, whilst the marching chugging, guttural stomp as the track kicks in, juxtaposed with Foley's monotone of: *"I push the magazine in and lock it. Safe, load..."* is thoroughly disturbing, yet you cannot turn away. Foley lists everything that's happening, as if recounting the events in some police interrogation, confessing all to tape. The most significant part is his shuddering, hacking cough and groan of disgust, as the drum machine plays on, hammering out this unremitting caterwaul as the sludge-rock riffs rain down.

As the opening lurch of the riff on *Angry* kicks in, you know this is going to be an uncomfortable ride – for over 5 minutes, this splintering, erratic pound of silt-coated mulch of metal and punk lumbers along, oozing with menace and loathing. There's an early *Nine Inch Nails* industrial thump to this, that skirts around the tripping electronica, sacrificing it for the throaty and disturbing gargle of a bass that has never been cleaned, whilst a huge flaming sign is erected, reading *"ALL DEAD, DO NOT ENTER"* as the drumming gets progressively faster and more unhinged in the song's staggering coda.

"I spent the 12 best years of my life behind a desk staring at a pile of papers rising up..." chants Foley on the scuzz-metal fervour of *Tuberculosis*, which builds into a heavy block of throbbing, barely impregnable noise-rock hate. *"I spent the best years of my life and now they're gone"* he intones, reaching the kind of inevitable and hopeless conclusion as this industrial, mechanical pound of unavoidable destruction rampages forward. The apparent bleakness of *Homesteader* creeps up on you and it only really sinks in how morbid and resentful it is as it begins to engulf the senses through those scraping, churning riffs that seethe and spit through the mesmeric drum patterns that overlap and devour each other.

We're nearly at the end now and with that, is the last stanza on the brutal grind-churn of final track, *Bolt Hit*, which reads:

*"Tuned to think I had a reason why
I'd burn this land to ash
Don't ask me that now just
Put a fire to my face
I'm going to explode"*

DUDE. Then that guitar kicks in again and it sounds like it's shrieking in horrific pain as the dirge, the unremitting descent into madness starts to take hold. No tour, no interviews – just pure power in a form that will inspire, terrify and intrigue in equal measure.

Pre-order Seraphim by Polonium from [Controlled Burn Records](#).

Listen to *Bastard* here.



MOWNO


POLONIUM




'SERAPHIM' DISPONIBLE LE 8 AVRIL CHEZ CONTROLLED BURN RECORDS


Retour au début des années 90, quand Manhattan grouillait et que Brooklyn commençait tout juste à entrer dans la danse. Là, armés de leur mélange de noise rock et de métal, Justin Fowley et Thad Calabrese – aujourd'hui baptisés **The Austerity Program** – se sentaient particulièrement isolés au sein d'une ville qui vibrerait plus volontiers aux sons du hip hop. Puis vint l'écoute de 'The IVth Crusade' de Bolt Thrower, les discographies Dischord, Touch & Go et Amphetamine Reptile. Les choses n'allaient définitivement plus être les mêmes : qu'il y ait quelqu'un pour l'écouter ou non, Polonium allait tout simplement jouer la musique dont il ne parvenait pas à s'assouvir. Vingt ans plus tard, il peut regretter qu'elle ait été enregistrée au milieu de nulle part. Seulement, cet isolement aura également permis au duo de n'être raccroché à aucun lieu, ni à aucune époque. On a beau penser à Big Black, Bolt Thrower ou aux Melvins à l'écoute de 'Seraphim', aucun groupe n'a su combiner tous ces éléments avec la même réussite que Polonium. Etrange mais encore incroyablement actuel, cet album est la deuxième salve que le duo ait composé. Profitant d'une pause dans l'activité de The Austerity Program, Justin Fowley a ré-enregistré ces dix titres. Simplement parce qu'ils incarnent une inspiration encore assumée aujourd'hui, mais aussi pour qu'ils existent et que quelqu'un puisse enfin les écouter.


PLUS D'INFOS
























 **Bastard**

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 Controlled Burn Records
Polonium – "Seraphim"

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