



Official Band Biography (*June 2026*)

Formed in Waterford, Michigan in 2001, The Black Dahlia Murder have spent more than two decades earning their place as one of the most relentless, uncompromising, and beloved bands in the history of American extreme metal. Named after the infamous unsolved 1947 murder of Elizabeth Short, the band built their reputation the old-fashioned way — through ferocious music, tireless touring, and an unwavering refusal to compromise their vision for anyone.

The band's origin story begins with co-founders Brian Eschbach and Trevor Strnad, two Michigan natives who shared a consuming passion for extreme metal and the drive to push it further. After releasing a demo and the *A Cold-Blooded Epitaph* EP on Lovelost Records — and making enough noise at events like the Milwaukee Metal Fest to turn heads across the scene — The Black Dahlia Murder signed to Metal Blade Records in 2003. Their debut full-length, *Unhallowed*, arrived that same year, and it announced the band with the force of a battering ram. Drawing on the Swedish melodic death metal tradition of At the Gates, Dissection, and Carcass while injecting the ferocity and intensity of the American death metal underground, *Unhallowed* established a sound that was instantly recognizable and entirely their own — blast beats colliding with melodic darkness, gore-soaked lyricism delivered with poetic precision, and a live energy that left audiences shaken.

The road would quickly become The Black Dahlia Murder's proving ground. Following *Unhallowed*, the band embarked on a near-relentless touring schedule alongside acts as diverse as The Red Chord, Arch Enemy, Napalm Death, and Terror — playing show after show, building their following one brutal performance at a time. Those experiences forged *Miasma* (2005), a harder, more personal record that reflected the chaos and camaraderie of life on the road. Landing a coveted second-stage slot at Ozzfest 2005 alongside Killswitch Engage, Mastodon, and Rob Zombie, the band continued to prove that extreme metal could compete on the biggest stages. They followed Ozzfest with a sold-out co-headlining run with Throwdown and The Red Chord, then took their brand of

American melodic death metal to Europe and Japan for the first time, cementing their status as a genuinely international force.

Nocturnal arrived in 2007 and debuted at No. 72 on the Billboard 200, signaling the band's growing mainstream reach without any softening of their sound. Hailed as a rebirth, the album brought in new rhythm section members Shannon Lucas on drums and Ryan "Bart" Williams on bass and delivered what many considered the band's most evil and inventive record to that point. In the fall of 2007, the band served as direct support to Cannibal Corpse on the sold-out Metal Blade Records 25th Anniversary Tour across the US and Canada. They headlined the 2008 Summer Slaughter Tour alongside Kataklysm, Vader, Cryptopsy, The Faceless, Despised Icon, Aborted, Born of Osiris, Psycroptic, and Whitechapel — and on June 16, 2008, earned Metal Hammer's Golden Gods Award for Best Underground Band, a recognition they were too busy on tour to collect in person. Further US runs with Children of Bodom and Between the Buried and Me and Canadian dates with Soilent Green and Misery Index rounded out one of the most punishing touring cycles in the band's history.

In 2009, they released Majesty, their first DVD — a two-disc collection capturing their music videos, extensive live footage, and an intimate documentary portrait of the band. Majesty debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Music Video Charts in the US and No. 5 in Canada, earning a rare 5/5 star review from Revolver Magazine. Deflorate (2009) raised the bar again, debuting at No. 43 on the Billboard 200 and No. 4 on the Hard Music Albums chart. Produced with Jason Suecof and Mark Lewis, the album introduced new lead guitarist Ryan Knight whose collaborative chemistry with Eschbach would define the next era of the band. The band brought Deflorate to the masses on the Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival alongside Cannibal Corpse and Slayer, then embarked on extensive North American headlining runs and a European tour as part of the Bonecrusher Fest alongside 3 Inches of Blood, Necrophobic, Obscura, The Faceless, and Carnifex.

Ritual (2011), their fifth album, represented a creative and commercial peak. Debuting at No. 31 on the Billboard 200 — their highest chart position to date — it was described as the most focused Black Dahlia Murder record ever made: a sprawling, ambitious work introducing strings, piano, and dramatic new dynamics while losing none of the band's ferocity. In support of the album, they toured Europe with Amon Amarth, headlined the 2011 Summer Slaughter Tour, and appeared at Wacken Open Air in August 2012 before embarking on extensive North American headline dates. They then toured globally in support of Ritual alongside Cannibal Corpse and Amon Amarth, converting new fans at every turn.

Everblack (2013) introduced the final piece of what would become the band's most celebrated lineup: bassist Max Lavelle and drummer Alan Cassidy, both bringing extraordinary energy, creativity, and commitment to the fold. Debuting at No. 32 on the Billboard 200, the album landed almost exactly ten years after Unhallowed and featured, for the first time, a song directly confronting the infamous murder that inspired the band's name. The band played the entire Warped Tour 2013 in support of Everblack, exposing their music to tens of thousands of new listeners daily, and followed it with extensive worldwide touring through 2014.

Abysmal followed in 2015, pushing further into raw, emotionally complex territory — a deliberately live-feeling record produced by Mark Lewis and Ryan Williams that captured a group fully come into its own as one of the genre's definitive acts. The album debuted at No. 45 on the Billboard 200 and was supported by extensive North American and international touring through 2015 and 2016, logging over 125 shows in 2016 alone across North America and Europe.

Nightbringers (2017) introduced guitarist Brandon Ellis — a prodigiously talented player whose collaborative spirit and compositional instincts helped usher in a new creative chapter. Debuting at No. 35 on the Billboard 200, the album featured iconic artist Kristian Wahlin returning to paint the cover, bringing the era full circle with the tenth anniversary of Nocturnal. The band celebrated that milestone by performing Nocturnal in its entirety on the 2017 Summer Slaughter Tour. The Nightbringers cycle proved to be one of the most relentless touring periods in the band's career: 2017 saw 100 shows across North America and Europe, followed by a staggering 134 concerts in 2018 — one of the highest annual totals of their career. During that cycle the band toured with Whitechapel and Meshuggah, appeared with Black Label Society and Insomnium, and played festival dates across North America and Europe, reinforcing their reputation as one of the hardest working live acts in extreme metal.

Verminous (2020) — produced by Ellis and the band and mixed by Tue Madsen — was hailed as the band's biggest evolutionary leap from one album to the next. Blabbermouth called it "a deeper and smarter realization of the Michigan crew's tried and tested formula," while Louder Sound declared it "absolutely excellent." The album's themes of underground identity and collective defiance resonated deeply with the band's global fanbase. Though the planned world tour was curtailed by the global pandemic shortly after release — limiting 2020 to just nine performances — the band returned to the road with characteristic intensity in 2021, logging 42 shows as live music reopened. The Verminous touring cycle ultimately stretched into 2023, culminating in the Verminous Remnant Tour alongside Terror, Frozen Soul, Fuming Mouth, and Phobophilic, as well as headline appearances at Blue Ridge Rock Festival and New England Metal & Hardcore Fest.

In May 2022, The Black Dahlia Murder suffered a devastating loss with the passing of Trevor Strnad — their vocalist, co-founder, and one of extreme metal's most beloved and charismatic figures. His impact on the band, the genre, and the countless fans whose lives he touched cannot be overstated. In his memory, the remaining members made the decision that Trevor himself would have wanted: to keep the band going, carrying his spirit and legacy forward in everything they do.

Co-founder Brian Eschbach stepped into the vocalist role, setting aside his identity as a guitarist to honor the band they had built together. Former guitarist Ryan Knight returned to the fold, and on October 28, 2022, The Black Dahlia Murder took the stage at Detroit's Saint Andrew's Hall for a hometown tribute show celebrating Trevor's life and the music he helped create — supported by Darkest Hour and Plague Years. Despite the enormity of the transition, the reformed lineup played 53 shows in 2022 alone, a testament to both the band's resilience and the outpouring of support from the global metal community.

Servitude (2024), the band's tenth studio album, is the record many thought impossible — and the one that proves The Black Dahlia Murder's story is far from over. Marking Eschbach's debut as lead vocalist and lyricist alongside the return of Ryan Knight on guitar, the album was recorded at Ellis' New Jersey studio with drums tracked by Mark Lewis in Nashville, mixed by Ellis and Lewis, and mastered by Ted Jensen. From the ferocious lead single "Aftermath" to the groove-laden "Mammoth's Hand" and the classically-styled "Panic Hysteria," Servitude is a statement of purpose — a band reborn, carrying a legacy forward with honesty, conviction, and the blistering melodic death metal that made them legends. The band supported the album with 74 performances in 2024, including an appearance at the prestigious Graspop Metal Meeting in Belgium, before carrying the momentum into 2025 with 53 shows including a set at the Louder Than Life Festival in Louisville, Kentucky and the Alcatraz Festival in Belgium.

Following the departure of Brandon Ellis in February 2025, the band brought in acclaimed guitarist Wes Hauch (Alluvial, ex-The Faceless) initially as a live fill-in to keep the touring machine rolling. Hauch's chemistry with the band proved immediate and undeniable, and he has since become a full member of The Black Dahlia Murder's lineup. Now co-headlining the Wrath Across North America 2026 Tour alongside Arch Enemy — with Septicflesh, Crypta, and Thrown Into Exile in tow — The Black Dahlia Murder enter the next chapter of their career as a band that has faced the unthinkable and emerged stronger for it: still hungry, still uncompromising, and still fiercely devoted to the music and the community they helped build.

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Boilerplate Bio

Formed in Waterford, Michigan in 2001, The Black Dahlia Murder are one of the most critically acclaimed and enduring bands in American extreme metal. Signed to Metal Blade Records since their debut full-length Unhallowed (2003), the band has released ten studio albums — eight of which charted on the US Billboard 200, with 2011's Ritual peaking at No. 31 — and built a fiercely devoted global fanbase through relentless touring and an unwavering commitment to their craft. Multiple Summer Slaughter Tour headlining slots, appearances at Wacken Open Air, Graspop Metal Meeting, Louder Than Life, Ozzfest, and Warped Tour, and recognition including Metal Hammer's Golden Gods Award for Best Underground Band have marked a career defined by consistency, passion, and artistic growth. Their tenth album, Servitude (September 2024), marks a powerful new era led by co-founder Brian Eschbach, who stepped into the vocalist role following the passing of beloved co-founder Trevor Strnad in 2022. With acclaimed guitarist Wes Hauch — who joined initially as a live fill-in following Brandon Ellis' departure in early 2025 and has since become a full member — now firmly in the fold, The Black Dahlia Murder continue to build on a legacy that remains as vital and uncompromising as ever.

Current Lineup:

Brian Eschbach – vocals

Max Lavelle – bass

Alan Cassidy – drums (2012–present)
Ryan Knight – guitar
Wes Hauch - guitar

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