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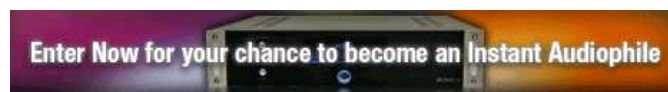
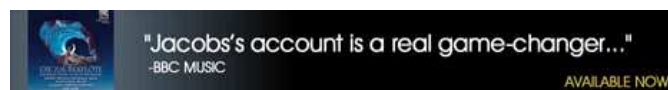


Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews

The Factory - The Factory - Acetate

The Factory represents a hard rocking, soulful time trip back to the past when big hair and loud guitars still ruled the club scene.

Published on October 25, 2010



The Factory - The Factory - Acetate ATE7041, 33:52 ***:



(Vance Bockis – vocals; Robbie Limon – guitar, vocals; Bruce Katsu – guitar, vocals; Bill Massey – saxophone; Scott Sartorius – bass; Ray Gugliotta (tracks 1 – 5); Mark Kermanj – drums (tracks 6 – 10))

The one and only album from Washington, D.C. rockers *The Factory* represents an artifact from a different timeframe pulled from the vaults 25 years after the ten tracks were put onto tape.

During the group's lifespan from 1985 to 1991, The Factory was out of step with the then-current music scene: they were closer in sound and spirit to The Dead Boys or The New York Dolls' proto-punk and in other ways were similar to the sweaty R&B revivalism of The Fleshtones or Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes.

This half-hour slab of soulful hard rock would never have materialized if not for Acetate Records CEO and producer Rick Ballard, who held onto a battered tape cassette of unreleased music until fate and the Internet intervened and he was able to find The Factory's bassist Scott Sartorius and eventually discovered the master tapes, which Ballard remastered and released.

A quarter century later the songs still vibrate and boom. Upfront, slightly punkish opener "Self-Submission" replicates The New York Dolls and The Dictators' gutter snipe attitude, a style not in vogue either in D.C. or elsewhere during the big hair decade. Robbie Limon and Bruce Katsu's twinned guitars provide a Rolling Stones-esque demeanor while singer Vance Bockis sneers about how much he wants his girl to treat him "like a dirty old tramp."

The surprisingly sweet-laced "Love You Forever" mirrors The Fleshtones' frantic rock flair with a mid-sixties garage rock rumble underscored by tumbling drum rolls and Sartorius' in-the-pocket bass. "True Romance" has a Rolling Stones-like swagger accented by harmonica stabs and a sharpened guitar riff. The track would have been too raw for Reagan-era radio stations, but today it sounds akin to a long-lost garage-rocked gem.

Saxophonist Bill Massey is underutilized on most cuts, but delivers classic backing on faithfully soulful "Ecstasy," where Bockis sings about good times with his girlfriend. The uncluttered arrangement leaves plenty of room for Massey to swing in an understated manner while the guitars trade rhythm, solos and riffs in interesting ways.

The Southside Johnny-ish tone is fully realized on rollicking "Love to Dance," which resurrects the Asbury Jukes' retro bar band alliteration with first-rate results, with bass and drums laying out a Stax/Volt funk drive – Sartorius' bass, in particular, pushes the song along – while Massey showcases a fundamental sax quality comparable to Clarence Clemons.

The album ends with hard rocker "Six Feet Down," a cautionary tale about living life on



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the edge. It was evidently The Factory's epitaph: one reason the group broke up in 1991 was due to Bockis' heroin addiction: he ultimately cleaned up but it was too late for the band's continuation.

Other than a handful of fans, it is hard to fathom who might be interested in this material. The Factory had solid hooks, propulsive riffs and energetic confidence: they could have been something in their day. But this time capsule is more historical curiosity than contemporary must-have: a preservation of the past that may not catch the ears of a modern audience.

TrackList:

1. Self-Submission
2. Where the People All Go To
3. Love You Forever
4. Misfortunate Son
5. True Romance
6. Ecstasy
7. Girl That I Want
8. Love to Dance
9. Puerto Rican Streetfight
10. Six Feet Down

-- Doug Simpson

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