

## Therapy? - A Brief Crack of Light



Therapy?  
A Brief Crack of Light  
Blast Records

Ireland's Therapy? is not a band to give up easily. For over two decades the trio has released high quality albums filled with an amalgam of styles that is truly their own. Therapy? cannot be classified as punk, metal, alternative, or industrial rock, but throughout their career the band has flirted with all of these genres, mixing them into the pulverizing alloy that is their thirteenth release, "A Brief Crack of Light."

Over the years Therapy? albums have come to be theme oriented. While the band has never released a concept album, several of the band's releases have a common lyrical thread that brings the individual songs to a single focus. The current theme du jour is human mortality. Even the name of the current album is taken from a quote by Vladimir Nabokov, describing life as "A brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness". The lead single "Living In the Shadow of the Terrible Thing" opens the album, and sets the tone, and the concept, that will define the

experience that is "A Brief Crack of Light."

Musically, Therapy? has moved between subgenres of heavy rock over the years. This release is no exception, offering a heavier, more metal tinged experience than the bands' last few releases. The chorus of the opening track is a brick that beats the listener into submission. That's not to say Therapy? has left behind the classic sounds expected by fans. While this is a very heavy album, both musically and lyrically, "Before You, With You, After You" opens with a riff that could have easily fit on 1992's "Nurse." Similarly, "Stark Raving Sane" is reminiscent of the song "Church of Noise" from 1998's "Semi-Detached."

The instrumental "Marlow" is a surprisingly lighthearted piece that sounds like Fugazi having a particularly happy day. Andrew Cairns' dark wit is as cutting as ever, as shows in song titles like "Stark Raving Sane" and "Get Your Dead Hand Off My Shoulder," a creepy number that has a tense edge. Where Therapy? shines, as always, is melding heavy music with melody. The driving rhythm of "Ghost Trio" is married with a pop melody that is almost counterintuitive to the music. All the same, these elements work well together. Closing track "Ecclesiastes" is a somber, melodic piece that stands in stark contrast to the remainder of the album. It is as quiet as "Living In the Shadow of the Terrible Thing" is driving.

Therapy? has never fit a single mold, and that's probably why I look forward to their releases. Sure, I'd love to hear another "Screamager" or "Six Mile Water," but with each outing Therapy? gives the listener something new, familiar, but completely unexpected. "A Brief Crack of Light" is no different. Therapy? builds on old sounds to give fans a new album that's somewhere between Joy Division, Black Sabbath, and Fugazi. I'm already waiting for the next dose.

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