

THERAPY? 'A Brief Crack Of Light' – album review

Posted by [Ged Babey](#) at 9 February, at 08 : 37 AM [Print](#)

Tweet

0

Like

Send

0



THERAPY?

A Brief Crack Of Light (Blast Records)

CD/DL/Ltd coloured vinyl

Available now

A far more important band than they're given credit for [Therapy?](#) They took uncompromising indie post-punk noise to a Metal audience and had chart hits into the bargain. 1993's *Screamager* is an absolute classic, guaranteed to get you singing along when it crops up on the radio, the Teenage Kicks of its day for the grunge generation. Tipped as the new Metallica at the time, Therapy? tore up Reading Festival three years in a row (1992 –94) but were over-shadowed eventually by Nirvana. They retain to this day a legion of dedicated fans (albeit mainly consisting of tubby blokes in black t-shirts and combats with obligatory little beards) They're quietly influential too, for such a noisy band, listen to Mclusky from a decade back or *Pulled Apart By Horses*; although its cooler of course to claim the Jesus Lizard as an influence.

The always the same/ always different maxim could easily and correctly be applied to Therapy? Twenty years in the business of rocking hard and dark, this is their thirteenth studio album and quite possibly their finest hour (41 and a half minutes to be precise). In that it's as varied as it is intense as it is definitively Therapy?

They have matured but with Rollins-like intensity, bone-crunching dynamics tempered with soul-searching and sensitivity. Inspired apparently by “a myriad disparate influences – Black Flag's primal clenched fist aggression, the skewed genius of Stewart Lee's coruscating comic monologues, the writings of Samuel Beckett, the irresistible swing and swagger of Charlie Mingus”. The album's title comes from a Nabokov quote. *Living In the Shadow of a Terrible Thing* is a great opener. Play it loud enough and indeed “Windows shatter and alarm bells ring...”. *Plague Bell* is hammering, sinewy metal which brings to mind the *End Of Silence* (Rollins Bands peerless meisterwerk) as does the overall feel of this album.

Marlow is a curveball – delicate repetitive picking then a disco in Hades vibe where New Order fight it out with Stuart Adamson type guitar trying out a raft of new effects pedals – and it's an instrumental. *Ghost Trio* seems to use Ian Curtis' vocal melody from *Isolation* (which Therapy? Covered on *Troublegum*). Andy Cairns uses a

vocoder to particularly good effect on the Killing Joke-ish Before You, With You, After You. ...There are bubbling electronics and subsonic dubstep bass in places, and the production has a thoroughly modern edge. The Buzzing, a disorientating jazz-punker reminds me of old label mates of Therapy? Silverfish (Whatever Happened to Lesley Rankine...?) There's a touch of Sparklehorse's weird melancholy about the hymnal Ecclesiastes with its refrain of 'everything under the sun ...is absurd'. My particular favourite though is the partly accapella Get Your Dead Hand Off My Shoulder, a bizarrely catchy horror-movie-theme-in-waiting, which bears Therapy's trademark sense of black humour.

To be honest, I probably hadn't listened to Therapy properly for years, I wasn't a devout follower, but this really is a return to form, a career-best, and an album worth getting hold of. Its dark, heavy, stylish, emotional, rocks like a bastard and I hate to say, primal and therapeuticbut the fact that every song doesn't sound "the same" is what sets it apart from the (younger) competition.

Tracklisting:

- 1. Living In The Shadow Of The Terrible Thing**
- 2. Plague Bell**
- 3. Marlow**
- 4. Before You, With You, After You**
- 5. The Buzzing**
- 6. Get Your Dead Hand Off My Shoulder**
- 7. Ghost Trio**
- 8. Why Turbulence**
- 9. Stark Raving Sane**
- 10. Ecclesiastes (Ged Babey)**

Southern are currently remastering and will re-release shortly Therapy's first two albums 1991's 'Babyteeth' and 1992's 'Pleasure Death'.

Posted by [Ged Babey](#) - Ged Babey is 47. from Southampton, has written since 1985 for Sound Info, Due South, various fanzines and websites, contributed to Record Collector magazine and was sole author of 'Punk Throwback' fanzine -the name of which was taken from an insult hurled at him by the singer with a young band he managed for a while. Ged believes that all good music and art has a connection with punk, otherwise it is no good.

[Album Reviews Featured Therapy?](#)
