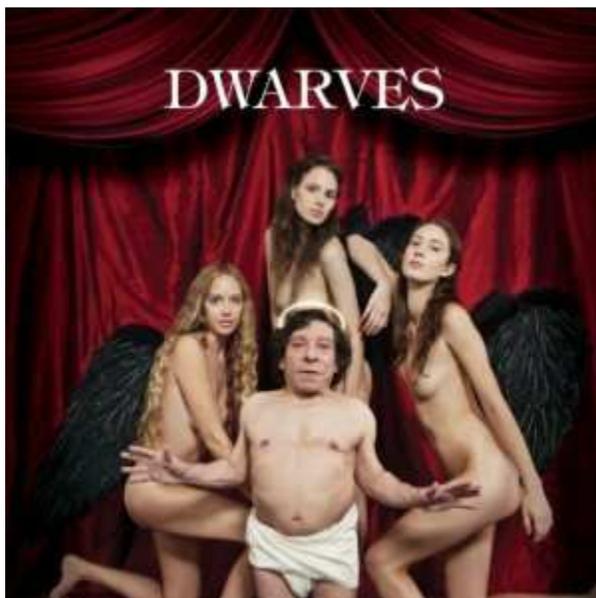


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The Dwarves — Are Born Again



(<http://antagonistmagazine.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/the-dwarves-are-born-again-2011-06-09-1.jpg>)

Yes. Oh, yes. The Dwarves: angry, vicious, unrepentant; crudely funny, bloodied and bruised in live shows, always intimidating but never boring. How many years?

Notorious as much for their onstage antics as their music, The Dwarves are a chaotic mess of chaos. Whether it's blood-covered lead singer Blag Dahlia ass-kicking guitarist HeWhoCannotBeNamed infamously faking his own death on stage during a crack binge in Detroit or their arrest by a truculent police officer often overshadowed their music, which is a shame as it's some of the best you can hear.

Finally following up 2004's seminal *The Dwarves Must Die*, an album that showcased their ability to seamlessly shift between genres, moving through suicidal hardcore punk while still maintaining their ferocity and sense of humor, *Are Born Again* is a return to the hardcore punk of earlier albums like *Blood Guts* and *Values*, a pop-punk sensibility and more polished songwriting.

Are Born Again is the best album they've ever made and a high water mark for punk in general. These 18 songs, only two clocking over two minutes in length, are as abhorrent and fucking glorious about punk as anything you'll ever hear.

From the opening 'The Dwarves Are Still the Best Band in the World', with its "let's get high and fuck some sluts" chorus, to the paean to underage sex 'Fake ID', complete with sampled police sirens, to the slacker anthem 'Working Class Hero' which features screaming vocals from Nick Oliveri. A particular highlight is 'Zip Zero', an ode to a hard-livin', hard-rocking song by what sounds like a shoutout from an elderly radio announcer. Strange, rocking, glorious, it's my favourite song.

The 18 songs fly by in a haze of aggression, humour and ferocious fucked-upness, and after the album's over 100 minutes of values, experimentation and great songwriting in the increasingly watered down world of punk, The Dwarves are still at the reach. 25 years on the road haven't dimmed their fire; if anything the years have just made them angrier, crasser deviants: buy this record. If nothing else, it'll keep them in drugs for a few days.

Alun Thomas

[The Dwarves Are Born Again is out now. \(http://www.thedwarves.com/\)](http://www.thedwarves.com/)