



The Dwarves

STAFF

The Dwarves Are Born Again (2011)

Music Video Distributors/Greedy

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Some 26 years into their career, the Dwarves have yet to mature. Despite that most of their members edge close to the half-century mark, they're still reveling in the primordial acts of fucking, fighting, feasting and more fucking. At this point, their odes to debauchery have ceased to be instruments for pushing the envelope or attacks on political correctness. Rather, because they've dedicated themselves to their primal urges for such an extended period of time, they've transcended from being cartoonish aspects of the human race and evolved into man's underlying id-given flesh and bone. On *The Dwarves Are Born Again*, the group of rampant beasts uses a decidedly intellectual approach to show that for even the most civilized among us, there's something ancient just under the skin.

Announcing their return on the modestly titled "The Dwarves Are Still the Best Band Ever", frontman Blag Dahlia proclaims "*Let's get high and fuck some sluts. / Do what we will not what we must!*" But then, in his next breath, he's urging for cures for cancer and AIDS. This contrast of the selfish and selfless is twined throughout the album, either smashing the two concepts against each other, or suggesting that they are one and the same.

Although the Dwarves have always been self-referential, on their new LP they approach a level of self-awareness usually reserved for hip-hop. On "Working Class Hole", the band recounts the tale of how they came to be veterans and also laments that they've been reduced to "regular" jobs. At the same time, on "15 Minutes" the band points their fingers at all the fresh-faced young punks and pop idols, echoing the ghost of Christmas future by letting more popular bands know that fame is fleeting.

In the past, the Dwarves have taken musical risks, with some paying off more than others. Their venture into heavy metal on 1991's "Speed Demon" resulted in one of their best songs to date, but the almost Zappa-ish genre hopping on 2004's *The Dwarves Must Die* featured experiments with hip-hop and dance music that were as interesting as they were distracting. Here, having taken some time to consider what the Dwarves are, the group keeps their wackier tendencies, but uses them to a much greater effect, causing their genre (and anti-genre) excursions to flow naturally from the music as opposed to simply being jammed in between three chords and three other chords. Although the band retains their heavy three-chord punk attack as the base of their sound, their experiments enhance their core rather than get in the way. "15 Minutes" seamlessly blends a techno beat into hardcore thrashing. "Do the HeWhoCanNotBeNamed" is a '50s bopper dragged through a Minor Threat filter. "Candy Now" is as much Joan Jett as it is the Dwarves.

The edginess that has always been prevalent in the band's records is used to its greatest effect. On "Happy Birthday Suicide", the band toasts the choice to cut out early. But the song, and the others of its ilk on this disc, isn't shock for shock value. While the *Take Action* compilations proclaim "Don't commit suicide," here, the Dwarves are shouting "*Sometimes I feel like ending it*"

all." In doing so, the band admits what others are loathed to do: Sometimes you really do feel like ending it all...or sometimes you really just want to have sex for the sake of releasing the urge...or sometimes you just want to fight for no apparent reason... To argue that these urges don't exist doesn't seem to be a truly accurate portrayal of the human condition.

What makes *The Dwarves Are Born Again* so effective is that the LP sounds like classic Dwarves, even though there really is no other Dwarves record like it. By tapping into the primordial urge of mankind—the very source that provided the fuel for their earlier classics—the band has delivered an edgy and thought-provoking record that neither retreads their past work, nor abandons it altogether. While they might be uncouth, nasty and inconsiderate of others on the record, maybe they only seem that way because those symptoms are so readily recognizable from personal experience...

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