



Thee Hypnotics

Righteously Recharged BEGGARS ARKIVE

Have a bang on this... Rock, rolled to perfection, and now recharged.

There's no more bizarre temporal anomaly than when a band arrives both 20 years too late and 20 years too early, as their entire potential audience remain fixated on a contemporary music scene that offers no alternative artist worthy of touching the hem of said band's flared leather garment.

And so it was with Thee Hypnotics. Straight out of High Wycombe, they were infused with a visceral, intuitive, freewheeling, salacious raw power more readily associated with the Stooges, MC5 and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. A living, breathing embodiment of a vintage rock band, exactly as such (seemingly extinct) creatures had originally emerged from the primordial, countercultural soup in '68, inexplicably manifested in the late 80s – a dark age, blighted by emasculated production, indie jangling, keyboard riffs and orchestral swoops.

Yet while Thee Hypnotics were redefining a lost past within an even more lost present, everyone's attentions were elsewhere: wearing raincoats in the grey drizzle of a Bunnymen gig or vainly trying to locate the sound of an actual guitar outside the solos of a Van Halen record.

So what were the planet's ill-served rock community missing while Thee Hypnotics vocalist Jim Jones was walking

Most of the quartet's recorded legacy is located here across four discs, though sadly not their landmark *Live'r Than God* audio-vérité EP from 1989. That said, there's this thing called the internet now, so you can hunt it down later if your taste is as whetted as it ought to be by the delights contained herein.

And what delights. There's the titanic, acid-fuelled, testicular magnitude of *Come Down Heavy* (disc one, 1990); the dark, opiated, horned-up and lascivious, Vegas-via-Hades bump'n'grind psychodrama of *Soul, Glitter & Sin* (disc two, 1991); the essential, if hitherto barely released, Chris Robinson-produced, riff-spitting, coke blizzard of *The Very Crystal Speed Machine* (disc three, '93); and disc four's tasty grab-bag of Peel sessions, demos, singles (*All Night Long*'s debut clarion to oblivion) and etceteras.

Battered by the almost inevitable spectres of addiction, death and disaster (essential byproducts of doing the job properly), Thee Hypnotics split as the 90s choked their last on fly-blown union flags and emergent EDM. Now buoyed by Jim Jones' subsequent solo infamy and an imminent live reunion, they're back, so load up on this exceptional set and right those past wrongs.



Richie Kotzen

Telecasters And Stratocasters:

Klassic Kotzen STORE FOR MUSIC

Lots of Kotzen.



Richie Kotzen has racked up over 20 genre-straddling solo albums since

beginning his career as a Shrapnel Records shredder in 1989 (in addition to releases with the Winery Dogs, Mr Big and Poison), and this set scores by gathering three records of a similar stripe, all centred around an uplifting blend of rock, funk and old-school R&B.

The combined effect is to portray Kotzen as a song-focused artist, tailoring his guitar playing and soulful vocals to suit the mood. Subtle traces of the Stones, Coverdale/Hughes-era Purple and Jimi Hendrix are discernible, but Kotzen distils these into a sound all his own, using the tones and tools (hence this set's title, named for Richie's guitars of choice) of a classic era in a latter-day setting.

Something To Say (1997, 8/10) kicks off with a raunchy one-two combination via *Something To Say* and *What Makes A Man*, strong hooklines emphasised with passionate vocal delivery. The remainder of the album offers hazy ballads (*Let Me In*) and darker moods (*Holy Man*) among its diverse delights.

What Is (1998, 8/10) is again varied in scope, highlights including the face-slapping riffage of *Open Your Eyes*, and a cameo from Mr Big bandmates Billy Sheehan and Pat Torpey (RIP), holding down an insistent groove under *Locked Out*'s cascading licks and king-size chorus.

Break It All Down (1999, 7/10) is a more mellow affair, the laid-back funk sweetened with gospel-style harmonies in places (*I Would*), making for an absorbing late-night listen.



Rich Davenport

Kreator

Reissues BMG

Kreative differences.



There are rich pickings here for thrashers of a certain age, with four more

expanded Kreator remasters. They cover the band's 90s output, a decade that began with business as usual, before the

Coma Of Souls (1990, 8/10) augmented here with a high-quality live set, consolidating all they did best. Their virtuosic technical riffing is enhanced with a greater degree of melody (*World Beyond*) and the solos of new boy Frank Bello (ex-Sodom, a transfer eerily to Metallica's Kirk Hammett, joining Slayer in Teutonic terms). The breakneck pace is balanced with dynamic shifts. Matching their musical development with more lyrical matter (environmental issues, materialism), they come a long way from *Endless Pain* in five short years.

They weren't kidding with the title of *Renewal* (1992, 6/10). It introduced industrial loops and slightly monotonous barked hardcore vocals. The band backed off with respect to the pace and complexity of the music, which was now more bludgeon than incision, and *Zero To Nine* mixing new most efficiently.

Cause For Conflict (1999, 8/10) found new drummers Cangelosi (ex-Whiplash) taking the band at warp speed (*Dogmatic*) through a gloomier extreme *Reign In Blood*-style thrashfest. Mille Petroz's vocals and the production are fuller than they did in the past, what's one of their best.

In contrast, *Outcast's*

7/10) strong material (Cangelosi's uncharacteristic lack of guitar solos) is mid-paced and occasionally doomy, Pez's sounding customarily heavy, yet perversely tuneful on killer riffs (*Black Sunrise*) returning industrial elements are far better integrated.

Rich Davenport

Julian Cope

Reissues UNIVERSAL

A key quartet from the modern antiquarian.



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the best material of his

Though echoes of th

Explodes were never t

from the surface, 1987