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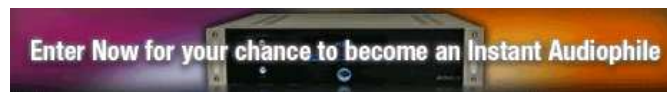
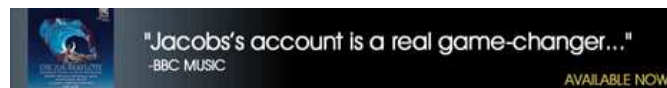
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Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews

The Superbees – Top of the Rocks – Acetate

The Superbees' new EP, Top of the Rocks, is a snarling, sneering and roaring six-song salvo.

Published on October 23, 2010



The Superbees – Top of the Rocks – Acetate ATE7040, 18:15 ***1/2:

(Dave James – vocals, guitar; Scott Carlson – guitar, vocals; Dat Ngo – bass, vocals; Johnny Sleeper – drums; Cody ChesNuTT – percussion (track 2); Rick Ballard – sax (track 3), producer, engineer, mixer, backing vocals; Jake Cavaliere – Farfisa organ (track 5); Reggie Kat – backing vocals (track 5))

Listening to Los Angeles-based punk-garage rockers The Superbees is not a passive experience. The quartet sneers, snarls and roars with abandon. After an eight-year lull the fearsome foursome are back with the six-track, 18-minute CD EP *Top of the Rocks*. Vocalist/guitarist Dave James – who sings with Iggy Pop's wild brashness and the flamethrower pitch of the MC5's Rob Tyner – is ably supported by his equally blistering bandmates: guitarist/singer Scott Carlson, bassist/vocalist Dat Ngo and drummer Johnny Sleeper, who pummel ears with a swaggering rock thud that combines The Rolling Stones' thick tone circa 1972, The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion's yank-crank barrage and The Stooges' black-leather proto punk.

The mayhem flares open with initial salvo, "Silver Jet," a shot of sleazy rock riffage. While James vocalizes about the Sunset Strip's darker elements, including businessmen pursuing urban kinks and "schoolgirls that look so hip" the group blasts out a punkish slam without restraint. On the hard and heavy "Greyhound Tooth," which cops a guitar lick from Led Zeppelin, James scowls in no uncertain terms about a girl he can't stand to be around anymore, "Greyhound Tooth is always sticking in my side/You give me fleas and you bring in the flies/You're always scratching at my front door/Greyhound Tooth I don't want you no more."

The group is augmented by the formidable Farfisa organ of Jake Cavaliere (from the likeminded The Lords of Altamont) on the bluesy, slightly psychedelic "The Lonely Kind," which slows the momentum but not the bluster. James repeats a nearly mantra-like chorus and relates the tale of a character who prefers living in an interior world and "won't come out to play," while the band maintains a head-nodding groove.

The pace jolts back up with a rambunctious rendition of Aerosmith's obscure 1974 paean to schoolboy sex and the search for good times, "S.O.S. (Too Bad)," which is a tougher, leaner and altogether more gutsier version than the one recorded by Steven Tyler and the Boston bad boys.

Acetate Records' main man, Rick Ballard, captures The Superbees' strut and din with a live-in-the-studio stimulus that emphasizes powerful drums, authoritative twin guitars, commanding bass and persuasive vocals. This is a violent high impact mix with the instruments and vocals close to the red, meant to rattle the speakers and designed to be played very loud. The only quibble is length: at less than 20 minutes, it seems as if the



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howitzer-and-yowl onslaught is over almost as soon as it starts. Let's hope a full-length follow-up is just around the corner. [This is the first EP we have ever reviewed (and may be the last)...Ed.]

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TrackList:

1. Silver Jet
2. Bad News
3. Greyhound Tooth
4. Sin & Glitter
5. The Lonely Kind
6. S.O.S. (Too Bad)

-- Doug Simpson

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