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Monster Island

Dream Tiger (MVD)
by **Craig Regala**

OK, back in the day, we tagged this drug folk. Nowadays, it might be called freak folk. When it was made in '01, I have no idea what it would be named. "Alternative," I suppose. What you get is frazzled stuff trying to make emotional sense of the world using the tools everyone can bandy about: James Taylor, The Elephant 6 folks, The Fugs, that Devendra Banhart guy who used to be on Young God Records who got his picture in *Rolling Stone*, and Syd Barrett.

You may call it psych-folk, especially since that can open up the zoner-duh-noise component '90s psych (Sonic Youth, The Dream Syndicate, Savage Republic) bathed in - albeit via acoustic/low volume division with sitar, tabla, realllly goofy lyrics - Velvet Underground bootlegs.

So, is this an affectionate piss-take on late '60s wyrd folk, ala XTC's Dukes of Stratosphear project (in the 80s, they played with '60s acid-pop very effectively), or The Upper Crust's retooling of '70s AC/DC riffage? I dunno. Seems like it. I'll namedrop the personal: Warren Defever (His Name Is Alive), Erika Hoffman (did time with Godzuki), Matt Smith (Outrageous Cherry, The Volebeats, THTX), and Cary Loren (Destroy All Monsters). Well, who cares? It's a wonderful record that sounds like it coulda come out on Shimmy Disc. It's got an eye-rolling approach to its "genre" that keeps the "revival" tag at bay using a buncha "ethnic" instruments for accent and humor. This isn't generally my diet, but if you can't playlist with George Harrison, The Incredible String Band, Devendra Banhart, Nico, The Bonzo Dog Band, The Frogs, Donovan, Fotheringay, Syd Barrett/early Pink Floyd, you need to dance around a different maypole. (www.musicvideodistributors.com)



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