

THE BUSINESS RECORD REVIEWS



ALIEN SEX FIEND POSSESSED

(Cherry Red)
New studio album from the reinvigorated Fiend.

8/10

It may be a challenge, but I'm gonna try to write this review of Alien Sex Fiend's new album without recourse to the "G word". Difficult, I know, but take away that perception of comedy-horror that you may have and let's get to the nuts and bolts of the world of The Fiend.

Long associated with The Batcave club and the 80's post-punk scene of dyed-black hair, fishnets and hair crimpers, the reality is that ASF have more in common musically with Suicide or Cabaret Voltaire than with Bauhaus or the Sisters.

Driving, pummelling drum machines, squalling analogue synth stabs, industrial strength bass lines and the indomitable Nik Fiend and his psychobabble lyrics and sonorous surrealism has been their stock in trade for most of their career and with long-time partner in crime Mrs Fiend still on board, they've carved a dark and dangerous niche for themselves that defies any categorisation.

Having never really went away (they've been releasing material pretty much every couple of years or more since 1983) this new album picks up nicely where 2010's 'Death Trip' finished; Nik's unhinged vocals are as fevered as ever, the pulsing synths and squelching basslines are as punishing as before and the songwriting retains a dense and deathly humour that is almost a trademark. Artists like Glenn Danzig and Marilyn Manson owe them a huge debt of gratitude and why people never made the link to how much Sigue Sigue Sputnik (and The Prodigy) lifted from the ASF template will always be a mystery.

The eleven minute 'In My Blood' is probably the central song herein and it has more than a passing resemblance to the aforementioned Suicide's "Frankie Teardrop" in its blood-curdling intensity and hushed bad-trip vocals. This is disturbing music for disturbed people; it's a whole lot of coal-black fun and slightly alarming but rarely lets up throughout not just the track, but the album as a whole.

'Ghost In the Machine' is slightly filmic; if you like your films made by David Lynch on antipsychotics, that is-and is another trippy, spaced-out journey through the twisted imagination of Mr and Mrs Fiend. 'Shit's Coming Down' is the single and is an unrelenting, full-force blitzkrieg of fuzzy garage guitars, clattering keys and thunderous drum pulses while 'Carcass' sees Nik at his paint-stripping best/worst in a song that is a lysergic nightmare of images.

'Invisible' is slightly anthemic and would possibly have made a more radio-friendly single, but lets be realistic, who's gonna playlist ASF in this day and age?

With exclusive remixes on all formats, the album also comes cloaked in Nik Fiend's unmistakable artwork which has been a theme since day one.

If you only remember them from the 'Ignore The Machine' single way back when, do yourself a favour and give this a listen. It's so far from anything else currently out there as to be virtually stand-alone. Just don't mention the G-word.

Joe Whyte

