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## Eerie Von's SpiderCider

### That's All There Is

#### Review by Bill Knispel

Most people know Eerie Von through his association with Glenn Danzig dating back to their days in Samhain, the seminal post-punk/hardcore band of the mid 1980's. Von's career predates those heady days, however, having been a founder member of the influential NJ punk group Rosemary's Babies. Since leaving Danzig in the early 1990's, Eerie has carved out his own little musical niche. His most recent solo release is *That's All There Is*, released by Eerie Von's SpiderCider.

Don't let the band name fool you, though – this is all Eerie Von - literally. Every note, every drum beat, every word, was written, played, or sung by the Eerie one himself. Musically speaking the territory should be somewhat comfortable and familiar...energetic NJ/NY old school punk, with a touch of rockabilly to season things up. Von's voice is snarly and exudes just enough attitude to sound genuine, not contrived. Guitars thrash and buzz, drums pound out a basic beat (Von was the drummer in Rosemary's Babies...it was not until Glenn Danzig insisted his presence would be more powerful at the front of the stage that he switched instruments), and bass guitar...well, the bass could be a bit more present in the mix.

In the end, however, this is back to basics, roots rocking punk music the way it was before it was co-opted into the mainstream.

#### Track by Track Review

##### That's All There Is

Punk albums need to open with a bang. You need brash guitars, flailing drums, and a singer spitting out lyrics right from the get go to ensure the listener is in the mood. Eerie succeeds with aplomb with his album's title track. It certainly doesn't hurt to have a tasty little guitar solo in the middle of the song that harkens back in some ways to the theme song from "The Munsters"...I'm not quite sure why it comes to mind when I hear it, but there it is. The mix is a bit hot here, but that will settle down quickly as the album progresses.

##### Without You

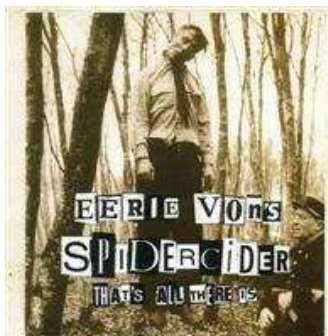
There's no time for odes to true love and romance on *That's All There Is*. Wouldn't you rather have a song about empowerment? About how it's all going to be ok now that she's gone? That you're going to be just fine? "Without You" is just that song. The time for sadness is over...it's time to rock out and show the world that you've moved on and things are just great.

##### Hey Louisa

NY/NJ punk bands seem to have a penchant for calling out girl's names in songs. OK, maybe it was just the Ramones. But Eerie Von gives his own spin on the "tradition" with a quick paced rocker featuring guitars that almost jangle and chime. Vocals are either chorused or double tracked, and the entire mix sounds both fresh and contemporary while remaining rooted in traditional punk aesthetics. It's a standout track.

##### It's Too Bad

This song sounds darker in comparison to the preceding piece. Once again we have fairly introspective lyrics from Von, and his guitar playing is suitably buzzy and heavy. I still wish his bass playing (which I always held as a highlight during his tenure in Danzig) was more present in the mix, but between his bass playing and four to the floor drumming, the song has no risk of losing the plot.



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### Whatcha Gonna Do?

The opening riff on "Whatcha Gonna Do" is one of the most impressive on the album. It moves just a touch away from punk toward the kind of music he'd be doing in Danzig. Lyrics are angsty, the metaphorical middle finger flying with gobs of spittle attached toward the listener. The guitar is rudimentary at best, yet the brilliant thing about punk is that you don't need technique and flash...just the right few notes played the right way. In the context of the song, the solo is more than adequate...it's right.

### Ohnonothimagain

The pace picks up on track six, "Ohnonothimagain." Von's vocals are a bit lower and darker sounding, and the song is among the paciest, quickest numbers on this release. He spits the words out at times more than singing them, and the tune itself thrashes about like an angry kid in a pit. A lot of people think punk was all about speed, but really it was more about attitude and anger than anything else, and "Ohnonothimagain" offers that in spades.

### Gone Away

A punk love song? Perhaps, but if it is, it's about love "Gone Away." Von reins the speed in a little bit, his vocals back in the slightly reedier tenor range again. His guitar solo reminds me of the Cure circa 1986 or so...in fact, one could almost look at this as the answer to songs like "Just Like Heaven." There's no longing, no missing the one who walked away.

### Undo-Redo

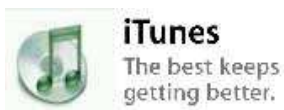
This piece is held together by another signature, memorable riff. I wish I could say I got to penetrate the vast lyrical depth here, but two things keep me from doing so. The first is that this is a punk song, and while punk can have surprising depth, it's not a necessity. The second reason for my inability to analyze the lyrics is that I honestly can't understand some...or most, actually...of them. They're spat forth in such a quick manner that words run together. There's stuff in there about deals with the devil, and questioning what can be done to undo what's been done, but as for the rest...we'll place the song in the "Louie Louie" file.

### Nothin Better to Do

Ahh, the ageless paen to boredom and ennui. Where would we be without it? Where would punk be without it? If punk came out of anything, it came from the absence of anything...of hope, of promise, of...something to do. And here, well, we've got nothing to do. Filled with attitude and a bit of frustration, this song sums up better than most the life of the teenager in New Jersey circa 1980-1985...a life I am almost more than qualified to comment on.

### Never Again

The album closes with what is possibly the slowest track on the release...and even at that, it's a fairly sprightly little number. Even the lyrics are a bit emotional and melancholy, Von swearing that he'll never do the things he's done to people again. Is it an apology? It is a subtle flipping of the middle finger to others? It's hard to say. What can be said is that this is an almost too quiet way to close the album. One would think that a punk release should end in a burst of energy and volume.





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