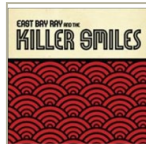


DYING SCENE



Album Review: East Bay Ray and the Killer Smiles – self titled

Posted by [Jeremy Stacks](#) on Thursday, September 29, 2011 at 10:00 AM (PST)



Editor Rating:

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I really wanted to like this album. I've been listening to the Dead Kennedys since I was in 9th or 10th grade (back in the late 80's), and I've even got a tattoo of the DK symbol on my leg but... I have to say that 'East Bay Ray and the Killer Smiles' self titled debut is exceedingly boring. I'm not sure exactly what I was expecting, it surely wasn't a new DK album (even though Ron Greer, who goes by the name Skip Mcskipster on this release has been the touring vocalist for the Dead Kennedys for the past three or so years) but I was hoping for something a little more focused than this mess. This album is all over the place in terms of musical styles.

The disc starts out with "Raising The Stakes", a song that has that early California punk sound and feel to it. The vocals are somewhat barked and slurred during the verse and the chorus is sung slower and in a lower pitch. This song reminds me of a cross between D.I. and early T.S.O.L. That sounds like a good combo but to me this track feels fake and overly forced.

Song two is called "Lipstick Cherry Red" and it has a different sound than first one. This track starts off very poppy with a sixties feel to it. It would fit well on a playlist with Del Shannon's "Runaway" and Tommy James' "Crimson and Clover" but only if it was a much better song. The main problem I have with "Lipstick Cherry Red" is that they don't commit to the style, the verse's are sixties inspired but the chorus falls back into the T.S.O.L.-ish sound and it takes a song that could have been really good and turns it to a mediocre waste of four minutes of my life.

Number three is called "You're Such A Fake", it's a more punk number with a slightly whiney vocal delivery. Oh, and it's obviously directed towards Jello Biafra.

I'm gonna skip ahead to song number five. This one is called "The Heart Is Something" and it's a cow-punk song with a minuscule amount of punk influence. It's pretty lame and this is coming from someone who usually enjoys it when punk bands take a stab at the country genre.

Track six, "It's Broken" try's to sound early 80's So-Cal hard core (think Black Flag) and does a half way decent job at it. Musically, this one is the closest to something you'd expect from East Bay Ray.

Skipping ahead to the tenth track, "Safe and Sound". Now we have a reggae song!

The other songs, "Area 51", "I'm A User" (a pretty good song), "The Runner", "The Hardest Part" and "16 Tons" range from sounding like T.S.O.L. and maybe a bit like The Gaslight Anthem, to sixties influenced, to poppy and at times all of the above.

There is one nugget of awesomeness on the cd though. The song is called "The Last Time You Failed" and it's the only track on here that I was thrilled with, and one of only two that will remain on my I-Pod after I turn in this review. Musically, this one is an all out early 80's alternative song, think of the more upbeat songs by The Cure, Bauhaus, or even David Bowie and you'd be pretty close. Skip's vocals even take on a Peter Murphy/David Bowie quality on this tune. Cool Song, unexpected (especially on an album chock full of average songs) but really cool.

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