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metal reissues galore VII



Underground Music Reissues Galore VIII!

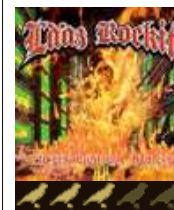
Reissues just keep on coming. Whether a forgettable cock rock band, an influential and legendary hardcore band, or an undecided German band, they all seem to be worthy of the once selective reissue treatment. Here at Deaf Sparrow, I oblige. Read on and spread the word.

I was never much of a fan of 80's San Francisco thrashers Lääz Rockit. However, I am pretty sure that during their time the band recruited a respectable following. Ever since their demise in the early 90's, the Lääz Rockit moniker has found it easy to survive even amidst the most unfavorable musical climates. Formed in 1982, this quintet quickly issued two demos and was snapped by Target Entertainment (who also released Ratt's EP), who in 1984 released their debut *City's Gonna Burn*. Plagued by typical big drums, the close to banshee singing/screaming of vocalist Michael Coons and typical mid tempo proto trash metal guitars, *City's Gonna Burn* resorts to communal chorus as bait. In other words, the thrash metal sound of Lääz Rockit seems quite tamed when compared to the sound that would emanate from their city through the likes of Death Angel, Vio-Lence and Testament. amongst others. Following a few reunion shows in 2005, the band decided to get back to work and in a timely manner (May of 2007) OSM Records re-released *City's Gonna Burn*, with three bonus tracks ("Prelude to Death", "Black Leather" and "Silent Cream"), all of which are actually kinda lame.

During the late 90's and before the metal comeback of the last few years middle age music fans truly missed the fun element brought about by sleazy melodic hard rock bands. Championed by bands as legendary as Motley Crue, as good as Skid Row and as shitty as Trixter and Pretty Boy Floyd, the genre has as many detractors as it has fans. To these ears though, the sound of most bands has aged quite badly. Nowhere is that more evident than in the reissue of Louisiana's Lillian Axe self-titled debut (produced by no other than Ratt's guitarist Robbin Crosby). Not to joke around too much but most of the ten songs included here sound like the typical self-empowering pop songs found in soundtracks for 80's teenage comedies. The kind of songs found right at the moment where the main character has once and for all decided to do all that's needed, in order to get the girl and pass the exam. Or something like that.

Despite the current revival of bands of the hard rock/sleaze/cock genre, (2007's Rocklahoma drew about 60,000 people) it is highly unlikely that bands of the ilk will score major hits in the current music environment. But that doesn't deter bands from reuniting. Only four years after disbanding Lillian Axe decided to stage a return in 1995. Since then, the band has released two records 1999's *Fields of Yesterday* and 2007's *Waters Rising*. Whether those two will ever get the reissue treatment is anyone's bets. That their first two albums are getting it is highly surprising. *Love + War*, their 1989 sophomore record, is almost every bit as horrible as their debut. Almost. Except the musicianship is much better; the playing has more clarity and the songs do not sound like mere cliches. Plus, the girl holding her breasts on the cover is a nice touch.

German metalheads Atrocity have always been a bit of a joke. Whether making shitty death metal, crafting embarrassing metal versions of covers of 80's radio hits, or going for a doleful



gothic doom approach they have always made sure the listener gets a hearty laugh. Though lauded by Metal Mind Productions as the best German death metal album, *Todessehnsucht*, the band's third full length released in 1992, is not that basically because such claim is pretty impossible to prove. *Todessehnsucht* is good though, especially considering its complexity, ambition and the year it was released. For a 1992 death metal release, it sounds quite elaborate with songs based around brutal riffs that seamlessly move through phases. Taking into account Atrocity's latter works, *Todessehnsucht* almost sounds like vocalist Alex Krull and cohorts were just discovering pretension, but were at a pretty solid place where they were aware of their limitations.

Boston's Gang Green (pictured above) formed in 1980 and were for a bit known as Little Sluggers. After a few shows, a seven song inclusion in the compilation *This Boston Not L.A.* two 7" singles, one 10" single, one 12" single, and a full-length (*Another Wasted Night*, Taang! Records, 1986) the band was ready to unleash its fury via *You Got It* (1987). As their first for Roadrunner Records, *You Got It* starts off rather quick with two punishing songs of pure hectic hardcore. Things seem come to a halt and become more standard hard rock for "Sheetrock" with its catchy chorus, "Ballerina Massacre" with a galloping verse and a trash metal chorus amongst other variations. *You Got It* cover plenty of ground, all very effectively. The signing to Roadrunner may have been the perfect move as at the time the label was totally bent on promoting thrash metal and Gang Green seemed to be intentionally crossing over.

One of the best things about hardcore is that it ages well. In the case of Gang Green's classic *Older...Budweiser* (1989) much of the credit could be given to producer Ross Humphrey, but for the most part is the songs themselves that sound so actual. Fast, melodic, catchy and at times tip toeing a blurry line between pop punk and crossover *Older...Budweiser* is surprisingly accessible. Not surprisingly, this release segregated some of their fans, as it boldly embraced heavy metal but didn't completely abandon hardcore. The inclusion of guitar solos is only one feature that opens the band's sound beyond their Boston hardcore roots. One thing that hadn't changed was the dead pan delivery of Chris Doherty who in hardcore fashion spews his line with little regard for melody. Upended to *Older...Budweiser* is their 1989 five song EP *I81B4U* (which reads I Ate One Before You), which starts with "Bartender" a rock and roll tune with a boogey riff and "Cum In U" which has a rockabilly backbeat. The other songs are straight ahead hardcore punk rock.

There are several reasons why I am not much of a fan of industrial heavy rock. I am not going to cite any besides that I find a lot of it to be quite simplistic, cliched and ridden with lame guitars. Tampa's Genitorturers are quite popular at what they are; some of their popularity stems from their on stage antics (the band proclaims themselves to be the world's sexiest band. Plus, their shows include nudity, etc. Key word being 'etc') and some of it stems from their music, which I must admit, is loaded with hooks. *Flesh is the Law* is the band's 2002 release and it contains three studio tracks, the finest of which is "Public Enemy". As a bonus to this reissue we get five live tracks. All their stuff is very accessible, highly melodic and void of substantial heaviness. If anyone ever thought that just because Genitorturers includes Morbid Angel's David Vincet in its ranks it would be a very heavy band...well is wrong.



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