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02/20/2009

Plastic Crimewave Sound



Plastic Crimewave Sound

(Prophase)

www.prophasemusic.com

When folks like Devendra Banhart, Julian Cope and the entire Acid Mothers Temple collective sing your praises, you must be doing something right. Chicago's Plastic Crimewave Sound (official motto: "Face melting acid punk since 2001") has operated thus far well under the mainstream radar, although frontman Steve Krakow (a/k/a Plastic

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Crimewave) is well known in indie circles as the twisted force behind the mighty *Galactic Zoo Dossier*.

In fact, if you've ever glommed onto that fanzine's eye-popping visual design - a mélange of psychedelic signifiers that include hand-drawn renderings of the bands being profiled as well as text also sketched out, painstakingly, by hand - you probably have a general sense of what Krakow's band sounds like. He's joined by Mark Lux, a/k/a Raspberry Kidd, on "broke ass bass" and synth; Lawrence Peters, a/k/a Skog Device, on "drum and mediation" (I don't think that's a misprint); and Adam Krakow, a/k/a Hands of Hydra, on "guitarsonics" (for the album, Nick D'vayne played guitar). Goblin Cock ain't got nothing on these guys as regards their *noms du rawk*. Together, these self-styled spacepunks trip the light fantastic, gathering together in their communal cave (and, no doubt, grooving with a pict) to fram on the jim-jam each night until dawn.

What this means for you, gentle pop music consumers, is nothing less than a saucerful of secrets' worth o' sonic fun. Thuggish opening track "(I Am) Planet Crushing" channels early Hawkwind, Krakow's vocal even summoning Lemmy's guttural yowlp, while "Dead Island Boogie," with its chugging beat and L-R speaker tandem guitar duel (one player unfurling grimy distorto licks, the other engaging in upper neck paroxysms worthy of the Boston Strangler), will indeed teach any young whippersnappers in the audience the rock 'n' roll primacy of the big "B". The group dips into Stoogeois nihil-punk for "Punched In The Face," what with its "Search and Destroy"-styled riffs and the titular phrase essentially getting repeated over and over to comprise the bulk of the tune's lyrics. It's on epic 15-minute suite "The Pasture," however, that the core PCS aesthetic comes into kaleidoscopic focus: for the first seven minutes, hissing percussion, droning/koto-like acoustic textures, mantra-chant vocals and aquatic guitar effects all conspire to place the listener into a trance, but once lulled, you gradually become aware of the cosmic engines kicking in as the song's second half unfolds into an exquisite, *motorik*-powered Krautrock jam.

It - and the album as a whole - is the aural equivalent of seeing a classic Jack Kirby cartoon come to life. Fin fang foom, baby!

Standout Tracks: "The Pasture," "Punched In The Face" FRED MILLS

by Hank Williams

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SXSW 2009

Hey punters,
SXSW is in a
month. Which of
these rumored
happenings are
you looking
forward to?

- DEVO's BMI showcase: 60-year olds with flowerpots on their heads!
- PJ Harvey and John Parish shamelessly hawking their new album.
- The Decemberists playing their new album in its (extremely long) entirety.
- Spinal Tap unveiling songs from their forthcoming new album.
- Any band featuring a ukulele player.
- Lil Jon and Tori Amos on the same bill.
- Ryan Adams & the Cardinals backing up Mandy Moore.
- R.E.M. making w/their dad-rock schtick. (Wait, that was LAST year!)
- Annual Canadian Blast BBQ: more Canadian bands you never heard (or care) about.

- Keynote speaker Quincy Jones rambling on about famine relief.
- The Oak Ridge Boys "reinventing themselves" once again.
- Those Demo Listening workshops.
- An Austin Segway Tour.

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