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American Speedway - Ship Of Fools Review

Posted by Mitch Michaels on 02.27.2008

Philly-based rockers make their debut with a hard-driving set of riff rock...

My Story

Bands are formed for different reasons. Some look at being as a band as a hobby, while others have the goal of making a living playing shows. Others see it as a way out of a small town. Some guys form bands with the sole reason to get rich and, I don't know, get on a reality **TV show**. Still, we all know that the most noble of reasons for forming a band is simply to rock the fuck out. American Speedway is one such band. How hard will they rock on their debut?

Their Story

American Speedway formed in the early part of 2007, a combination of friends and musicians from the Philadelphia area. During their first gigs, the band made a name for themselves locally as a loud, riff-heavy rock band with an energetic, alcohol-fueled live show. They soon began to play outside of Philly and all over the east coast. During Independence Day weekend, they brought the house down at the Heavy Rebel Weekender festival in North Carolina.

The band recently recorded their first album. They also shot their first video, "**Ship Of Fools**". For more info (including live dates) you can check out American Speedway's **MySpace**.

The Album

On January 22, 2008, Prophase Music and MVD Audio released *Ship Of Fools*, the debut album by American Speedway. The album is available on vinyl, which is packaged with the full CD version.

**The Band: 7.5**

Michael Thursby Speedway: lead vocals, guitars
Johnny Griswold: guitars, backing vocals
Billy Angry: bass, backing vocals
Chris Callahan: drums

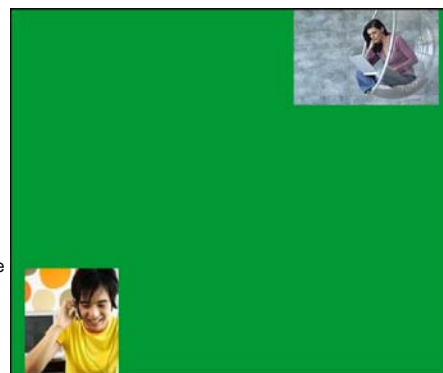
According to American Speedway's press, the band is best experienced live. *Ship Of Fools* seems to do its best to remedy those uninitiated though, as it practically begs to take your speakers to their limit, mimicking that distorted rush of noise when you're standing knee deep in beer bottles and a little too close to the edges of the stage. That will leave your ears ringing for a day or two, as will *Ship Of Fools*.

The band plays riff-heavy, pissed off rock 'n' roll, the kind of stuff they call punk these days simply because no one remembers how bands like the MC5 plugged in and brought the house down with a few chords and a tender riot. In an age when rock is high priced golden circle tickets and 30-year reunions, it's good to know that there are still bands coming in the other end of the pipe.

Michael Thursby Speedway has a great presence, equal parts Bon Scott and Johnny Rotten with a gravelly yell that's not only urgent but necessary to be heard above the blaring wall of guitar. The rest of the band provides background vocals on the sing-a-long tunes, while the rhythm section grooves pretty hard. This is just damn good rock music, people.

The Songs: 7.0

1. Ship Of Fools
2. American Speedway
3. One Foot In, One Foot Out
4. Far Behind
5. Drinkin' And Drivin'
6. Cocaine



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7. Don't Tread On Me
8. Make Some Noise
9. No Control
10. Same Old, Same Old

At only 32 minutes, *Ship Of Fools* is an all too brief tour de force of whiskey soaked, loud barroom rock. On "No Control", Michael Thursby screams "I need a drink right now and the whiskey's workin' might fine." It's the whole reason for this album in one line. *Ship Of Fools* is far from groundbreaking. The themes of drugs, drinking, driving fast and by-God loving be an American aren't going to change the world, but they are going to resonate with similar minded rockers, be they punkers, skinheads, or just any regular guy who likes to blow off some steam by rocking his balls off.

Sure, *Ship Of Fools* ain't that deep, but with fun cuts like the blazing title track, the fist pumping "Drinkin' And Drivin'" and searing guitar rock like "Cocaine", it doesn't have to be. Once the album ends with the sing-a-long, bullshit decrying anthem "Same Old, Same Old", you'll find your ears both begging for mercy and begging for more.

The 411: American Speedway's debut is a blaring, take-no-prisoners romp through 30-minutes of badass rock 'n' roll. The band has some nice chops on display, both in guitar licks, groove-oriented beats and a charismatic lead singer, but all of that is secondary to the fact that this is extremely fucking loud. If you enjoy any kind of rock music that doesn't have any other message than drink, fight and get f'ed out of your mind, then *Ship Of Fool* will make your Saturday night.

Final Score: 7.5 [Good] legend

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