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American Speedway: Ship of Fools



By Jesse Schmitt, published Apr 29, 2008

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Rating: 4.5 of 5

On the debut CD release of American Speedway entitled "Ship of Fools," there is a carefully studied, traditionally articulated punk ethos which may come off at first as same old hack. However if you listen a little closer to the subtle arrangements, the joyous rollicking, and the incisive lyrics, you will hear a band who is not only trying to do punk rock in the post-punk generation, but they are also positing that they do it on their own terms and with no apologies.

The album "Ship of Fools" begins with the title track. A simple looping guitar chord, heavy drums, and pretty shabby (albeit loud!) production values may at first glimpse turn off a listener. However there is an authentic mono-quality tinny sound in the record which brought back my earliest recollections of the classic LP. The opening track also has some pretty incisive lyrics "full speed ahead we plow with no remorse...where we're going we might not survive; so cut to the end we're not making it back alive." Punk lyrics with a decidedly "un-punk" resonance in these times of tumult which exist in our world today; this rollicking band not only has a fair amount of angst, they also come off with a message that you need to hear to understand; are you listening?

American Speedway is a relative new kid on the block with a congealed lineage which extends only as far back as February 2007. Michael Thursby Speedway (guitar/lead vocals) Bill Angry (bass/vocals) Johnny Griswold (guitar/vocals) and Chris Callahan (drums) make up this quartet who began as a high energy live act. Their ethos is simple: they play what THEY like; which is, according to them, the only "real rock and roll."

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