

the DEVIL'S PLAYLIST

Whenever I discover a band that rubs my rhubarb, I want to learn as much as I can about them. I want to know how the group came to be, what they sound like live, and maybe even what makes the band members tick.

One such outfit is Tucson, Arizona's The Mission Creeps, who lent us an alternate version of "Monster" – the original appears on 2010's *Dark Cells* – for our *Hymns Vol. II* compilation. You know, the song that sounds like it's being played by a gang of resurrected surfers in a garage while a black and white horror movie is projected on the wall.

Well, last month TMC released *Halloween* (Refractory Records), a nine-song EP that, frankly, caught me a little off-guard. Gone were the hooky, well-crafted songs, replaced by instrumentals and a lot of spooky sound design, which, while effectively chilling, felt a little beneath them. If only I knew the story behind it...

When I reached out to the two lead Creeps, singer/guitarist James Arrr and bassist Miss Frankie Stein, I hesitated to call *Halloween* a novelty album for fear of offending them. Surprisingly, not only did they embrace the term, they revealed that the record is their take on *Chilling, Thrilling Sounds of the Haunted House*, a kitschy collection of effects created by Disney's sound department, originally released in 1964.

"The funny thing about [the term] 'novelty' with us is that it gets filtered through our lens, and subtexts evolve in the songs that are more serious if you listen closely," explains Arrr. "'Witches,' on the one hand, is a fun little ditty about witches. But, on the other, it's really about judgment, persecution, manipulation and mob mentality."

Another little game-changing detail? Some of the sounds are actual audio captured by Arrr and Stein during a night spent at an allegedly haunted B&B called Oliver House in Bisbee, Arizona, with the South Arizona Ghost and Paranormal Society (SAGAPS).

"After listening to [the recording] hundreds of times, there are no explanations for many of the sounds," says Stein. "Whipping sounds, chairs moving across the floor, a maniacal laugh, people speaking in German and what sounds like Norwegian – there are lots more sounds we can't even describe."

The experience inspired most of the EP's soundscapes, in particular "Plum Room," which begins with noises from the footage. As a bonus, the terrifying raw recording of the sleepover is included on the skull-shaped USB drive version of *Halloween*. After tagging along on another SAGAPS investigation that Stein and Arrr believe led to a spirit following them home, the musicians say the ghost-hunting expeditions have made them revisit the question, "What is scary?"

"On *Dark Cells*, we touched on how the recesses of the mind are far more scary than things that go bump in the night," says Arrr. "But here we were back at that crossroads, realizing that sometimes things go bump in the night and the fact that there's no rational explanation can cause your mind to wander. Ultimately, it seems a bit silly and hard to take too seriously. Remembering that old Disney record we all had puts things back into perspective."

Speak for yourself. So mote it be.

TREVOR TUMINSKI



armed with its debut album of psychedelic guitar fuzz, unfeeling female vocals (rendered especially eerie because they're sung in the band's native tongue) and a strangely provocative sense of clandestine beauty. Given singer Noora Federley's almost monotone approach, Seremonia often sounds like Nico fronting an apocalyptic hard rock version of The Velvet Underground. One song out of the ten is a toss-away; "The World of Rock 'n' Roll," a love letter to the group's influences, rings of one of those songs that probably plays better in Finnish (translated lyrics are included in the disc's booklet), but the other nine – including frosty standouts "In the Shadow of the Gravestone," "Lucifer's Snakes" and "Sacrificial Feast" (which offers up "Black cat bones boiling in a cauldron / Gnashing teeth, bloody mouths") – possess an elemental weirdness that'll nip ya to the marrow. TT ☠☠☠☠



THE JIMMY PSYCHO EXPERIMENT

ROCK

Mad Monster Cocktail Party

INDEPENDENT

Drop a couple fresh eyeballs into your martini and settle back for a relaxing evening – Psycho Charger frontman Jimmy Psycho has temporarily set aside his raucous psychobilly persona to embrace his smoother self on his new side-project album, *Mad Monster Cocktail Party*. Serving up a baker's dozen of easy, cheesy listening versions of horror standards, TJPE offers gently rocking renditions of familiar soundtrack tidbits such as *The Exorcist's* "Tubular Bells" and *The Munsters* theme, in addition to vintage numbers including "That Old Black Magic" and, surely the highlight, a cover of the Haunted Mansion staple "Grim Grinning Ghosts." Though the vibraphone and piano tickling is clearly performed on a synthesizer, Jimmy's self-described "horror lounge musick" works well enough, especially when, as in "Ghosts," his band members also get

in on the action. Though it may be a little too bombastic (and occasionally menacing) to really succeed as background music at a swingin' Halloween party, this is a fun idea that should surprise Psycho Charger fans with its unexpected approach to some of horror's best-known hits. PC ☠☠☠☠



MASTAMIND

HIP HOP

The Mastapiece

TOXIC RECORDS

It's a bold move, touting one's own album as a, uh...*Mastapiece*. Then again, this is the eighth record by seminal horrorcore artist Mastamind and if the Detroit rapper hasn't taken the customary self-mythologizing bullshit to the utmost by this point, then he's well overdue. He certainly doesn't mince words on the title track, a spellbinding hardcore throw-down that surprisingly rises to its own pomp – the "Hellrazer" threatening to "chop off the Devil's head just to bring you proof." In fact, those left wanting by the dunderheaded likes of Necro or Insane Clown Posse will find Mastamind's gruff, Ice-T-like delivery and blunt-force rhymes on vintage-sounding jams such as "I Am Pain," the wonky, carnivalesque keyboard hook of "City to the South" and the swirling kill mantra "To the Death (Satan's Army)" a welcome reminder that the dark, mid-'90s fundamentals of the genre – catchy, minor-chorded moodiness and extreme lyrical violence – are alive and well. Mastamind may not give a fuck about anything (he declares as much on multiple occasions), but he's done his damndest here to bring some respect back to horrorcore. TT ☠☠☠☠

