

THE MIDNIGHT EVILS

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BEST ROCK BAND

Even following the head-kicking, throat-scorching, stick-it-in-yer-yeah! squall of their last album, the Midnight Evils' Estrus release *Straight Til Morning* remains a high note in their career. And we do mean high. "People may think that pot turns you into hippies," drummer Jesse Tomlinson noted in a recent issue of the local music mag *Lost Cause*. "But we recorded that whole new record high as a fuckin' kite, and it's about as un-hippieish as you can get." Tie-dyes and longhairs, cover your ears: Singer Jonny Evans shrieks like he's got the Catheters hooked directly into his person, guitarists Steve Cooper and Brian Vanderwerf and bassist Curan Folsom make like the three Stooges with their acrobatic, rhythm-fueled thrashings, and Tomlinson pounds away on drums like he's got two gavels and everyone he knows is guilty. But if these garage punks sound intimidating, consider their affection for the Twin Cities music scene: Vanderwerf regularly appears at lesser-attended local bands' shows, and during Radio K's recent Power Surge pledge-a-thon, Dillinger Four proclaimed that Folsom allowed them to auction his sideburns in support of the station. Apparently, the band whose closest approximation of a romantic song is called "Bitch Like You" is now all about the love. Maybe there's some hippie-ness in them yet.

SLEAZEGRINDER

Who the hell expected a righteous noise like this to come from fuckin' Minnesota? Not me, man. I thought everybody already froze to death up there. Maybe all this Midnight Evil melted them at just the right time, cuz it sure is reducing my speakers to a bubbling goo. This is the most 'metal' album Estrus has ever put out. I mean, it's not really a heavy metal record, or nothin', but it's got the same sense of sledgehammer intensity and heads down fury as some meth'd-out speed metal band. Slayer rocked too, ya know, before they got fat. It's also got more AC/DC riffs racing around then Buckcherry, even. All these hammer-ons and 70's powerchords are taken on high speed test drives throughout "Straight 'til Morning", and they hit the wall more than once, leaving plenty of flying shrapnel and fiery explosions in their wake. It's an orgy of psychotic rock and roll menace, and although it's not quite as headache-making as noise mongers like Sagger or Blowchunks, it is a formidable clamor. Not for pussies, in other words. If this is the sound of evil- and it is, I checked- then good ain't got a chance. Let us smash, crash, and thrash for rock and roll, citizens, straight on 'til morning and on right through Tuesday, if we have to.

JOHN PEEL's Record Box :: March 2003

Albums

Midnight Evils - 'Straight Till Morning' (Estrus)

Pilot To Gunner - 'Games At High Speeds' (Arena Rock)

Various - 'Terrorized Vol. 21' (Terrorizer)

Stanton - 'Walking Songs' (Jonson Family)

THE SAND FAMILY MAGZINE
(MARK'S RECORD REVIEWS)

Band: Midnight Evils

Album: *Straight 'Til Morning*

Label: Estrus

Your enjoyment of this CD depends chiefly on your ability to accept and enjoy the fact that it begins with a minute-long wankophile blues guitar solo (the kind that makes the player close his eyes, shake his head back and forth and act like he's making love with his guitaretio)n. Once you're past THAT without laughing, the rest of the CD is thoroughly enjoyable energetic garage punk! The singer has a great shouting Zeke-style voice of fun, grit and perspiration, and the band plays lovable uptempo chord thrappin' in the old Johnny Thunders style (not hardcore speed, but not rock and roll speed either -- right there in the middle!). The mix accentuates FULL BAND live-expression, meaning that this is not a guitar-dominated recording: it's a drums/guitars/bass/vocal-dominated recording. They sound like they'd be a heck of a fun live act too!

This kind of music -- and there are several bands playing it in the underground these days -- appears to be the modern-day equivalent of dangerous '50s rockabilly. The same insane, frightening spirit of the devil to scare parents, but updated for today's market. Sideburns and greased back hair still accepted, high-octane funnycars probably enjoyed with whiskey and foul B.O. - maybe even cowboy hats and long beards! But no mohawks. Punk with no mohawks. There! That's what I think! If you like good old rock and roll but faster than usual, grab the first New Bomb Turks album ("Destroy-Oh-Boy!!!") and see if they've got the Midnight Evils lying around too. You just can't listen to guys having this much fun without getting in a good mood! "Midnight Evils"? More like "Midnight BOLL WEEVILS," if you ask me!!!!

Perhaps it's best that you didn't ask me.

FYD

Goodness From Estrus

Midnight Evils - *Straight Til' Morning*

Oh my. This is real damn good.

I shouldn't be sitting at home typing when listening to this. I should be shoplifting. Having wild, unprotected sex with a drifter named Tanya. Driving. A little drunk on a country road when everyone's asleep and it's just us and the road and we're about to hit that crazy hill where we're going to catch some air and land with sparks. This is like looking up at the God of rock and saying, "Bring it." And she kicks, forcing a size 40 Lady Red Wing down your dumb white throat.

I'm serious, man. I hear a lot of the band Bored! in here...harpoonish guitar heroism and a lead singer who's fucking bulletproof, abandoning any desire to preserve his voice for telling bedtime stories to his children down the road. And while they're really simi-

lar to Bored!, that band suddenly seems studied and tame in comparison. Instead of duplicating sounds like MC5 and the Stooges, these guys are playing from some primal power source. It's like a stomach virus. These guys have something to get out, and it's got to get out now.

A fun place to start is the one minute fury of "RD-400" which sums up their power and control. A lot of bands'll do this throwaway track where they play as fast as possible and beat the drum kit at random and burn it into plastic like they're all clever and shit, but those tracks are never any good. Here, the flash and the thrum thrum thrum and the beat crash beat and the scream is rolled as tightly and artfully as good sushi, and it's one of the best minutes of noise I've heard since DRI or Unrest back when they had a pair. And it serves as a great introduction to the next one...the title track. It's about as sedate as this record gets, which means a good Detroit rocker that doesn't even let the solo get a spotlight...the whole thing is fanci-fied by some guy doing this "YEAhhhhHHHHHHHHHHHHHH" way the fuck in the background and dipping in and out like he's being chased around the room by someone with a leather mask and a chainsaw. Nothing about this record sits still, and even when it rests its elbows on something as cliched as a guitar solo, just look behind that guy and there's someone giving you the finger over his shoulder.

There's an homage to Radio Birdman's "Murder City Nights" on here called "Twin City Lights" that borrows the chorus and ups the anger and phlegm about 300 fold...kind of like if the original were a Tonka truck and these guys took that truck and glued razor blades and glass shards to it and then set it on fire and rolled it toward your sister. There might be some kind of lyrical connection to the original but fuck if I'm ever going to figure out what this guy is saying and, you know, I don't want to know. As long as those bubbles of snot are popping in his throat and he keeps whelping like that, I'm going to be really happy.

"Gone To The Dogs" is another good one, using the guitars like a clothesline, these high-pitched wails that collectively sound like an air raid siren and they hang the lyrics and screaming and tambourine on it and it just floats by like steel clouds shaped like men doing cartwheels. You know that wild screaming that goes on at the end of Mission Of Burma's "That's How I Escaped My Certain Fate?" That's everywhere on this record. People in the studio just playing and screaming at random, and there's so much on here that sounds improvised but fits so well that it all feels like a beautiful rock and roll accident.

Definitely the best rock record I've heard so far this year. I'd like to see someone top this. Really! Because that'll be a pretty fucking good record.