

Sha La La – Musings About Music, Vol. 9

Apr 22, 2019 Jamison Floyd MUSIC 1



Celebrate greed! Decency be damned! Get [redacted] however you can! Celebrate greed! Nothing matters but your own satisfaction! So here are some things we found at least mildly satisfying lately.

Before reviewing the audio version of *Far the Sake of Heaviness: The History of Metal Blade Records*, we had never listened to an audiobook because, well, music exists. Read mostly by founder **Brian Slagel**, the book tells the story of the rise of American heavy metal from a label started in a garage outside of Los Angeles. It's introduced by Lars Ulrich (well, Slagel reading what Ulrich wrote), who tells how he was compelled to start the band that would become Metallica just so they could be on Slagel's first *Metal Massacre* compilation album.



The reading is much more historical recount than titillating tell-all. *The Dirt* this ain't. The sauciest of details dished is that the first time the label worked with Slayer, the band was playing with squirt guns and having a farting contest. Fucking Slayer! *For the Sake of Heaviness* goes era-by-era as metal gets bigger, then darker, then smaller, then full of Cookie Monster vocals, and finally becomes the multi-tentacled beast that lurks in both pop culture and the darkest recesses of the underground. So you'll hear of the lean nineties, when grunge stole sales from its faster relative (though you'll hear Slagel talk about loving bands like Alice in Chains, and even Goo Goo Dolls), and how his taste kept him from signing any turn-of-the-century-era nu-metal banal bro-out bullshit bands. You'll hear

about Jim Carrey's love of Cannibal Corpse, which got the band a spot in the *Ace Ventura* movie, and there's some comedians talking both about metal and releasing comedy albums with Slagel, and the story of a former LA Kings hockey player who loves death metal, and, of course, bits of information about some of the greatest metal bands of the last forty years.

The book itself probably has a lot of great pictures. Buy that.

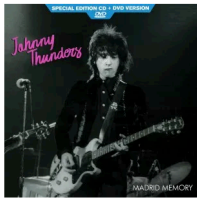
The new record from Richmond, VA death-post-sludge (or are they post-sludge-death?) band **Inter Arma**, *Sulphur English* is a torrential blend of speed and density that layers technically tripped out guitar lines all throughout wild beats and monstrous vocals (Iayperson's note – you won't like this record if you can't tolerate death-metal style intense guttural vocals). The guitar work on this record is a rabid riffery and trippy of electrical sound shards zig zagging blurry trails deep in dark depths of audio space. Behold! The extra couple notes around a time-change, the echo bouncing behind hard crunch, the feeling that your riding the back of a bottle rocket, all violently exuberant. If you had a friend who only played hardcore riffs, and then one day his conscience cracked for the better, and he started playing mind-blowing technical shit while still keeping that hardcore feel, well, that friend could play on this Inter Arma record.

Speaking of metal that makes you feel like you're on a ride, the new track from the instrumental Illinois band **Pelican** soars – [here's an early version someone else recorded in D.C.](#) New album coming in summertime. Plan a road trip around it.

A wild 7" split between **Acid Mothers Temple** and **The Melting Paraiso U.F.O.** (that's the full band name, so we'll let you imagine what the song sounds like), and the LA-based spastic noise rock band **Orphan Goggles** is coming out sometime in May. That Orphan Goggles side, "Hey Bud, How's Your Blood" is frantic fun. Vocals bounce from a sneer to gasp-shrieking like The Cramps, and the guitars remind us of when rad bands that loved Fugazi would be crammed into a coffee shop, playing so hard their fingers would get cut and blood would splatter all over the guitar. We'd never heard Orphan Goggles before this and have been pogo freaking around the house (scaring the hell out of the dog) digging their maniacal post punk, which twitches an like an even more short-circuited Les Savy Fav of sorts.



If you've been feeling a great sadness in your bosom lately, lighten up and get heavy with Arizona's **Okilly Dokilly**. This latest band from the burgeoning Grimickcore scene (see *Mac Sabertooth*) combines the Christian r'er-do-bad practicality of Simpsons character Ned Flanders with heavy metal sounds. It's as jovially juxtaposed as you might imagine, with Flandersisms belted out in throaty death metal growls. We're particularly fond of the song "I Can't, It's a Geo" which takes a simple hardcore riff, and speeds it up at the command "Faster!" but then peters out when singer Head Ned growls out the chorus bemoaning the notorious lack of speed attributed to the now-defunct car company. Be careful with this – your square friends might think it's spicier than a box of Red Hots with a cartoon devil on the box, while your metal head friends will only find it as daring as vanilla. But all will have a good-natured chuckle. See 'em perform live in their stupid sexy green sweaters over pink polos, but for the Good Lord's sake, watch out for the t-shirt cannon.



Another day, another **Johnny Thunders** live release to keep his poorly recorded legend kicking. This latest, *Madrid Memory*, out on CD and DVD from Cleopatra Records and MVD, is worth a listen and a gander because it's Thunders reunited with both Jerry Nolan and Sylvain Sylvain of New York Dolls for a gig in the Spanish capital. Three-fifths of one of the greatest rock'n'roll bands of all time should sound better than three-fifths of everything else ever recorded, but this is from 1984 when nothing rock was very good, and the players were in the midst of a slapdash European bunch of shows, so things never mesh enough to put any real power behind the songs. Opportunities abound, as they get right into the Dolls' "Personality Crisis" with Sylvain and Thunders riding together again

through a rough recording that wrongly highlights the mulleted Billy Rath's bass lines more than that jet-speed dogfight of rippling guitars. Hearing what amounts to an echo of Thunders and Sylvain playing together is still a decent fix. Thunders, who starts the show in full silver-sparkly-jangly bullfighter getup, cracks about falling Spanish class three times and asks the crowd if anyone speaks Puerto Rican. They close the first set with a reverb twanged "Born to Lose," (which is spelled "Born Too Loose" on the album and the screen graphics, because fuck editors, I guess). For an encore, Johnny comes out and plays "Eve of Destruction" (which the screen title labels as "Like A Rolling Stone" because fuck even a basic knowledge of rock classics, I guess) with a Spanish flamenco guitarist whom the liner notes, and our ears, tell us he never rehearsed with.

Cleopatra is also releasing a movie about Thunders' last days in New Orleans called *Room 37*. Check the trailer [here](#): it's already got people arguing about the details and merits of its existence, so it's already a lot like Thunders' career.

We'll leave you with some good news. **Crass**, the anarchist punk collective and band, recently [joined Twitter](#), and they occasionally tweet out links to free music. The Crass catalogue varies from raw English street punk to experimental what-have-you, but it's pretty hard to find outside of sketchy websites that will steal your SSN and your car keys, so get thee to Twitter, get some Crass, and see how the world ends.



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