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Review: 'Party Day'

'Sorted'

- Label: 'Optic Nerve Recordings'
- Genre: 'Eighties' - Release Date: '24.9.21.'- Catalogue No: 'OPT4.029CD'

Our Rating: ★★★★★★★★

Listening to this 2 cd compilation of everything Party Day put out between 1983-6 I can't believe I didn't hear them first time round, was it because they were from Barnsley that I missed out? Although judging from the artwork contained in the booklet the album comes with I did see one of the bands singles for sale, (In the Cage in the Great Gear Market on the Kings Road) it never made me buy it. It seems has been my loss as they are a very fine Death Rock or Goth band indeed.

The album opens with Rabbit Pie that could be the bands tea of choice or it could be a dark twisted goth or death rock song of betrayal and lust with a sound that's not far from Boy era U2 with the sparse drums working well against a very cool bassline.

Firehorse has the dark pulsing bass sound as means of seduction as the guitar lines that eventually come in to emphasize what the bass and drums are doing as he still longs for his Firehorse.

Carousel has nothing to do with the film, instead sounding like early Inca Babies or Gun Club but with a tambourine tapping out the endless beat that the carousel of sound revolves around.

Athena opens with some sampled conversation off the radio as the sounds slowly develop around the bass line and carefully placed and played drums and ends up sounding like Wasted Youth's slower songs as they ask if we can see her. The more the song goes on the more tribal the drumming becomes like early Adam & The Ants musically if not vocally or lyrically.

The band's theme song Party Day has a dark malevolence to it, but with vocals that sound like a very laconic almost half speed Morrissey (Before he became a total twat obviously), this reminds me of Colours by Brilliant.

Glasshouse 1982 is more jangle pop than death rock and has a nice acoustic guitar jangle to it that feels a bit like The Wedding Present. It was also the title track of the band's debut album.

Opium Gathering is slow dark and delicate as if you are all slouching around on a floor up in Villiers Terrace getting ready to pass that pipe around the room and allow everything to shift as you melt into the floor as the vocals get more desperate while feeling like they have been trapped into smoking too much Opium.

Tin Sky has shards of guitar decorating the insistent and beguiling bassline as the almost not there backing vocals add background texture before the tale at the centre of the lyrics gets going to keep things disturbing like they are stuck on a windswept moor looking for a way back.

Row The Boat Ashore is gloom laden and indebted to P.I.L.'s Metal Box as it gets going with swirling insistent guitars and as ever a dark brooding bassline as the vocals get more and more

Let Us Shine almost feels a bit like The Cure musically and in the guitar runs but not in the vocals that are a bit more like Balaam & The Angel, either way this sounds like it should have been better known than it is.

Smile has a slow dark brooding intro of cymbals and bass for this slow tortured love song as they just want to see you Smile while it sounds like they are ready to slash their wrists if you don't Smile at them.

Sovereign back when it was released could have been a jibe and poke at all the young people who wore Sovereign rings and medallions but is more about them telling us all to bring them our Sovereigns to them as if they have a right to own them all.

She May Be Blind but she can still dance to this nicely insistent gothy floor filler as they see another woman they want to go out with on that dance floor, this is nice and broody even as the guitars start to soar.

Stay In My Heart is achingly familiar and full of the sort of heartache you have for a partner who has moved on from you before you were ready to let them go, as they hope to get you back once more, this has a Psychedelic Furs type feel to it.

Laughter has the odd pretty girl laughing at them, probably for having a floppy fringe or some other crime against fashion and other reasons for getting all angsty and twisted over a slow beat as he eventually starts Laughing at himself.

Simplicity is a swelling jangly goth-tinged rumble that uses the modern Lovers Roadrunner beat to come up with a rather different song but damn it works well.

The Other Side is rather impassioned song about someone who's going home and that they'll see on The Other Side that sounds like Gary Crowley might have frothed at the mouth over it when it came out originally.

Precious One is another song of love and yearning for that special Precious One and will she spurn his advances, or will she agree to be his girl as the guitars soar and the bass keeps a very steady beat going.

Career is what they'll be getting now that new-born child has arrived, the bills need paying and searing indie goth tunes don't quite pay the bills that way, like one last great hurrah before serious adulthood sets in.

A Passing Pain keeps well within the bands formula and the lyrics will worm there way into your head eventually about the same time that guitar line gets stuck in your head.

Glorious Days is a paean to the glories of youth that's gone by and features some cool Spanish guitar that feels almost a little out of place as the normal dark drum and bass led goth rock carefully unfolds.

The album closes with Surge that well feels like a surge of energy has come over them and they've managed to find a sax player to join in the fun as they Surge on still looking for love and time for one last guitar solo as things break down a bit and it starts to sound a bit mid-80's Simple Minds, but thankfully the sax comes back in and it's a cool way to close this in depth look at Party Day.

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impassioned.

Poison has angular guitars and an air of desperation in the vocals as this dark tale unfolds and ends with a strange fade out.

The Spider is somewhere in the hinterland between Dub Sex and The Inca Babies but trying to re-work The Cure's A Forest into something a bit more twisted, although of course this came first so maybe Robert Smith ripped them off.

Flies that was the flip side to The Spider when it was released as a single is slower darker and just driving home feelings of desolation and angst over a very insistent beat.

Boredom opens with some feedback and drums and the sort of bassline normally heard on 80's era Nico live performance as the bands ennui unfolds in all sorts of jagged and unexpected ways. The one thing this song isn't is boring, even if it does owe a small debt to Joy Divisions They Walked In Line.

Grace is a doomy tale of love and despair as they ask Grace all sorts of unexpected questions in a way this feels a bit like Easterhouse.

Atoms closes the first cd with a slow bassline that the guitars splinter off, as another relationship gets Atomized within the descending beats as they've disappeared quicker than the keyboards arrive and go.

The second cd opens with Borderline that sadly isn't a goth rock cover of the Madonna song, instead being a dark impassioned tale over a sparse goth beat and jangly guitar.

Glasshouse (1985 single) is as jangly as the version one on the first cd, with its dark undertow and some bass drum that really hits nicely.

My Heroine is a love letter to a woman that they think should be their Heroine so they can be a junkie to her over a dark brooding 80's goth smack backing as they start to twitch in need of one more look and kiss from that perfect woman and that immaculate hit they are seeking.

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