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Crystal Antlers: Tentacles

(Touch and Go)

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Betty Clarke

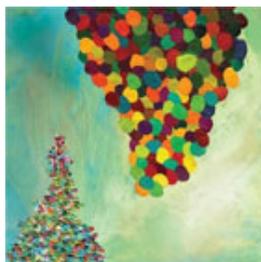
The Guardian, Friday 3 April 2009

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Crystal Antlers

Tentacles

Kill Rock Stars



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Crystal Antlers are six sometime-chimneysweeps from Long Beach, California who make punk-ignited, psych-influenced, soul-fuelled garage rock. This is an angry, heartbroken soundtrack for unsettled times: two guitars, two drummers, bass and organ turn on one another like rabid dogs, then parade together with the poise and grace of Crufts cup-winners. The lo-fi barrage of noise renders Johnny Bell's lyrics indistinct, but his fury is never in question as he yelps and roars through Time Erased. Shades of Stax, 1960s girl groups and unexpected lounge prevent the band from tumbling into mindless prog, even if they can't stop the songs getting samey. But the white-knuckle ride of Tentacles, Andrew's fried blues and the rainbow of styles in Your Spears see Crystal Antlers bucking the trend - not just rioting but inspiring, living up to their impressive promise.

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