

## Post details: Crystal Antlers: "Crystal Antlers"

There are thousands of new CDs in the Uncut office, and John Mulvey is on a mission to find the good ones. Check Wild Mercury Sound every day for rash, ill thought-out, yet strangely trustworthy reports on the best forthcoming releases. From forthcoming blockbusters and choice reissues, to underground treasures - we hear them here first




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## Crystal Antlers: "Crystal Antlers"

2008-09-09 11:17:25

As is always the way, I suppose, I finish **one compilation of newish psych acts**, then a load more records start turning up. For a good 30 minutes now, my new favourite band has been some shady punks from Long Beach who allegedly travel in "a vegetable oil-powered school bus", and have a percussionist called, well, **Sexual Chocolate**.

Continued...

This is **Crystal Antlers**, and they sound to these ears like bratty young brothers of **Comets On Fire** - ie totally hotwired and fried psychedelic punks - only with a little of the noise removed for fractional extra clarity. From a quick trip round Google, Crystal Antlers seem to have a snarky, anarcho-hipster sense of humour - they claim to be chimney sweeps, quaintly - which is more in keeping with LA antecedents like **The Icarus Line** than the New Weird America/Underground Psych cabal.

Or, perhaps, it aligns them to the droll likes of **Mudhoney**, whose molten garage drones also have some affinity with bits of this debut release. The "Crystal Antlers EP", produced by **Ikey Owens** of **The Mars Volta**, seems to have been out a while in the States, but is getting a bigger push with a November reissue on Touch & Go.

And, I think, it's awesome. The "Crystal Antlers" EO begins with a squall of high-end feedback, a frantically overheated Farfisa (slight hints of **Wooden Shjips** here), and the singer rasping urgently. The speed of this song, "Until The Sun Dies (Part 2)", accelerates and decelerates quixotically, so that you're never sure whether you're going to hit a hardcore thrash or a sequence of flotation-tank prog. There's some furious psych shredding in there at the death, too, and a bit of atonal sax honk.

"Vexation" has that hoarse surging energy of the Comets circa "Blue Cathedral", minus several degrees of fuzz but plus some more prominent unhinged "Funhouse" sax. At this point, it's hard not to be thrilled by what on earth Crystal Antlers must be like live. "A Thousand Eyes" and "Owl" then repeat the trick at slightly more considered gallops - Comets circa "Avatar" perhaps - with the latter especially being a kind of flaming, preposterous punk-prog ballad (that also maybe shows the faintest connection to The Mars Volta, without the algebraic time signatures, of course).

"Parting Song For The Torn Sky" (oh yes), though, is possibly the best of the lot: a hollering, psychedelically deranged sludge trawl, hinged around a gargantuan freak-out solo, that really evokes the Mudhoney comparisons. It's tremendous. But you should check them out for yourself, of course: here's the **Crystal Antlers Myspace**, where "Owl", "A Thousand Eyes" and "Until The Sun Dies" are all playing. Let me know what

you think. . .

**John Mulvey**

**3 comments** • **Trackback (0)**

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### Comments, Trackbacks:

**Comment from: Neil [Visitor]**

Good spot on the Comets and Shjips likeness John, Wooden Shjips and Howlin Rain are both down as friends on the My Space page. Had a quick listen, sounds very promising, listen to more later.

2008-09-09 @ 11:23

[Permalink](#)

**Comment from: Kris [Visitor]**

Had a quick listen and it sounds ace. So much so I'm downloading the EP from iTunes as we speak. I love Howlin Rain, but the absence of the Comets has left me searching for some barely-hinged freak-outs; the type of stuff Juilan Cope delights in eulogising on his headspace site. This'll do nicely.

2008-09-09 @ 12:59

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**Comment from: bubba [Visitor]**

nice call on Crystal Antlers John. A couple of other, possibly more oblique references for me are MC5 & Love!?!Glad to hear it's getting a physical release soon..there ain't nothing like having it in your hand!..if you know what i mean!

2008-09-09 @ 18:29

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