

New Releases from the DIY Bandits Collective

Paul J. Comeau

The DIY Bandits collective are many things: a record label, a distro, a booking agency, and a bunch of cool people from many walks of life who are tired of the status quo.

The Bandits do not see themselves as anarchists, as they say on their website, “DIY Bandits do not belong to the anarchist scene, punk scene, underground scene, or mainstream scene. Bandits are not interested in being seen as a scene but rather in dismantling all scenes.”

That said, they do support a number of rad anarchist projects (including the zine you hold in your hands), and for that we can all be grateful. As a record label, DIY Bandits puts out an eclectic mix of artists, in CD or CD-R formats depending on the artist and the financial resources of the collective.

These albums reviewed and many more can be ordered directly from the Bandits. Check out their website, www.diybandits.com or write to them via snail mail: DIY Bandits, HQ., PO Box 101, Ansonia, CT 06401.

PRETEND YOU'RE HAPPY

THE GREAT JOYFUL REBELLION

CD

Pretend You're Happy is the project of Jeremiah Morelock and a gaggle of backing musicians. Part of what makes the project what it is, is a conscious effort by Morelock to “become more emotionally risky in my song writing by depicting the ‘it’ that I believe in, without relying on sardonic exaggerations, double negatives, or political manifestos,” he writes inside the CD case.

If The Great Joyful Rebellion is indeed the “apex” of such efforts, as Morelock calls it, then it is a pinnacle of musical craftsmanship. The Great Joyful Rebellion sounds like a soundtrack to a great indie flick, or the performance of a rowdy sort of rag-tag orchestra.

There's an epicness present on many of these songs, a gravitas if you will, that conveys power, but is not above getting rowdy and having a good time.

Tracks of particular note include “Hail To The Dream,” “If The World Was Free,” and “Sailing Through The Stars.” “Hail To The Dream” is the first proper song after two short preludes, and establishes the tone of the album.

“If The World Was Free,” while barely a minute long, is a rager of song that starts out subtly before exploding with energy. “Sailing Through the Stars” is by far the best track, encompassing everything that is awesome about Pretend You're Happy into the space of just under seven minutes.

I'm not sure who this will appeal most to, but this is an album worth checking out whatever your musical inclinations.

RAMSHACKLE GLORY

LIVE THE DREAM

CD

Ramshackle Glory is the latest in a line of inspiring radical folk projects from Pat “The Bunny,” Schneeweis, formerly of Johnny Hobo and Wingnut Dishwashers Union.

With Ramshackle Glory, Pat has assembled an array of talented co-conspirators for this new project, and their collective output, Ramshackle Glory's first album Live The Dream is among the best of Pat's projects thus far.

Lyrical topics range from anti-capitalist attacks on the status quo to love, and addiction, all told with a poetic flair. Of particular note on this album are the tracks, "From Here Till Utopia," and "Vampires Are Poseurs," which capture the essence of upbeat folk/punk. "Vampires Are Poseurs," is also great for the parts where Pat beatboxes.

Fans of past projects by Pat, and folk/ punk in general will quickly come to love Ramshackle Glory.

SOLE

NUCLEAR WINTER VOLUME 2-DEATH PANEL

CD

The jarring beats and haphazard rhymes of Sole's Nuclear Winter Volume 2-Death Panel, are a challenge for even the most loyal fan of political hip-hop to bear. While the politics expressed in the song titles and suggested reading list appear right on, Sole's rhymes are flat and uninspired, resorting at points to cursing in place of providing lyrics of actual substance.

The cacophonous beats of many songs were difficult to listen to, so much so that they distracted from the messages expressed in the lyrics. Political hip-hop is awesome for its potential to forge powerful messages with great beats, creating songs that stick in the minds of listeners long after the last note fades. This album is one sure to stick in the minds of listeners as well, but for all the wrong reasons.

fifth Estate

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