

# The Rolling Stones

David Gaynes

1969

a review of

The Rolling Stones, "Let It Bleed," XZAL 9363, London Records

You must somehow listen to this album—whether you steal it, buy it, or play it with your nose is irrelevant, or rather, up to you.

As is everything.

If you do listen to "Let It Bleed," and hear it, there's not much I can say to you. If you don't—nothing.

The best poet (no such thing) writing the best poem (ditto) about the most beautiful day ( ) can only hope at best to recreate a pale shadow of the cellular experience that moves his pen.

All of which gives me little excuse to go on past this point. You should be using this time—right now—to listen to the record.

But I know some of you. I've seen you, in Summer, hovering at the edge of the swimming pool asking four, five, seven ferchrissakes people in a row what the fuckin' water's like before you get yourself wet. Maybe I can sprinkle you a little to make it easier.

Maybe I can push you in.

There's no point in talking about the individual songs. Like: "This is a song about blablabla...featuring Mr. Soandso on electric kazoo...recorded underwater."

There isn't a dud on the whole album. Each song will jump out of the speakers at you sooner or later, depending on where you eat your soup.

My own excitement forces me to mention "Midnight Rambler" and "Let It Bleed." So I did.

But to take the album apart reminds me too much of the kids who play two seconds of an album over and over 'til the needle drops through to the turntable or huddle, like catatonics, in psychedelic ballrooms, waiting for the neighborhood Ginger Baker to stir them to morbid life with his patented drum solo.

Well. Since if I kept at this, I would eventually define, in space and time, a record review by exclusion (put together everything I don't say and send it to Rolling Stone—they'll pay you for it) I may as well talk about "the music" as they say in the trade.

It's monster. Of course.

Now that, of course, is a pretty dangerous thing to say, and leads me to an interesting story.

A while ago a "rock 'n' roll critic" was sent some tentative John Lennon-Yoko Ono releases from Apple Corps, London. For one reason or another, it seems each of the two discs were recorded on one side only.

The chomp played the blank acetate anyways.

He reported that sides two and four consisted of an interesting monotone with a subtle, subliminal beat, that is, while at first annoying, soon relaxing and even hypnotic. He suggested that it might be good for balling or meditation or something like that.

Clapton-Winwood-Baker knew where it was at—naming their band "Blind Faith."

BUT, until I can't say "of course" about the Stones, I damn well will.

One of the things that's so fine about this album is the way the musical elements brought together combine so easily into the kind of valid musical synthesis that defies labelling. Like, the only reason to throw names—C&W, acid-rock, blues—is to exploit those kids we left back on the ballroom floor, waiting for the next Chinese fuzz-tone banjo virtuoso from Muscle Shoals.

“EXTRA! EXTRA! COUNTRY LEMON & THE CLOWNS NOW DOING IDAHO MUSIC!!!”

Sheeeeit!

Yes, there is some “country,” but we are spared plastic sobs and yodels. There's some slide guitar, lots of it, in fact and pretty-nitty-gritty, but none of it is cloying Elmore James imitation—Jeremy Spence.

Everything that is on this record belongs there and is its own justification.

Alright, somebody out there. Ask me. The inevitable question (and oh, so fashionable, these days) is it REVOLUTIONARY?

Are you? Quick.

Why? Why not?

Yes, it is. It is if it makes you want to fuck, get high, be strong and solid with your brothers and sisters. Jump up and stop taking shit. Smash Some things that need smashing and build what begs to be built in its place.

You see, music is as music does. Perhaps that should ease the minds of those of you who will feel vaguely guilty for digging the album version of “You Can't Always Get What You Want,” which is augmented by the London Bach Choir.

People used to huddle around transistor radios straining to hear “dirty words” in the top 40 stuff. Now a favorite game of some is milking every last “subversive” drop out of today's often obscure lyrics.

Fuck that shit.

With suburban kids getting together in their uncle's recording studios moaning FUCKFUCKFUCK, ball-squeezeyum, pantpantpant unh... or screaming REH VO LOO TION squee balm blam twaaaaang flabadabad-aba...that shit don't hardly mean nothing, anymore.

I mean the question is (always is) what does it do to you? What does it DO to YOU?

The Stones sometimes say what they mean and sometimes they don't. But they always mean what they say.

Nobody can miss the meaning of their line “...don't you think there's a place for you between the sheets?” On the other hand, few will realize that “she blew my nose” is an allusion to Shakespeare's use of nose as a phallic reference.

The magic that the music works through your being is always there, a thing apart from whatever analysis you try to kill it with.

Check it out. The Stones' sensuality happens in your pants, not on some full page ad full of clever hype and pseudo-erotic pictures.

Surely this is the least informative record review in recent history. But that's because it's about the record. And if listening to the record doesn't tell you what you need to know about it, nothing can.

There's a new Stones' album out. Hope you like it.

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