

Mp3 Artistic Decline - Random Violence



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Seminal hardcore L.A. punk rock from the same scene as the Descendents, Black Flag, Minutemen and Redd Kross. 29 MP3 Songs ROCK: Punk, ROCK: Noise Details: It's really a trip hearing this Artistic Decline, "Random Violence" album again. Not having a turntable in a convenient location, now it will be on CD and available to the world to download. The CD reissue on lowartmusic has bonus tracks from compilations and the first New Underground Records 7 inch EP. I think it will have about 30 songs in all. [29--ed.] "Andy Warhol" is one of the first songs we did and it was played by Rodney Bingenheimer on KROQ on his show, "Rodney on the ROQ." He also played other songs by us that we brought to him on acetates before the album was finally finished. We played all of these songs live at clubs like the Vex and the Cathay... "Random Violence" is really the only band composition and Mark, the drummer, sings it. "Manic Opression" was Greg's lyrics and my music, then we added a bass riff that Ron was trying to stretch into a song for several months as the intro, so that was called a band composition. The other songs were written by Greg or me. Ron brought in a few from his previous band. From the Minutemen we learned that a song could be any length, so songs range from 6 seconds to 3 minutes. D. Boone took us under his wing and got us our first L.A. and Hollywood club shows. They would come to our house parties and play a few songs on our equipment. One time I even got to play drums with Watt and D. Boone while their drummer was busy picking up on some punk cutie. Our first singer, Steve, had a good punkhouse pad. He even rented the garage to Redd Kross. That was the period when Dez Cadena had quit Black Flag and was singing and playing guitar for Redd Kross. We were lucky to be in the thick of it. We didn't know that all of these people would be punk legends some day. Milo was going away to college and the Descendents didn't know what they were going to do. Black Flag was banned from using their name in public ("Everything Went Black") and we would play at parties with them and other more arty bands like

the Invisible Chains... The Artistic Decline cover art is by Ray Pettibon. He sold me the art for five dollars out of a box in his bedroom. He had another one I liked of Jim Morrison (the baseball player). I was looking for something that would look good on a record center label like Red Cross' "Born Innocent" record. I changed my mind and wanted to use it as the cover later, so Gary Kail from New Underground Records brought him to my house and I asked him and he said it was okay to use it for the cover. (Pettibon had stopped letting his brother, Greg Ginn, use his art for SST record covers because Greg had taken art without permission and used it on the covers of countless make releases too numerous to mention. I thought I'd better ask permission to use it on a cover.) I had heard he hated rock and punk by that time and I had mostly rock and punk records to play. I happened to have a John MacCormack record and he said I should play that. It was pretty stressful having him over when I knew he didn't like his art to be on punk records anymore. Remastering the songs bring back a lot of those tribulations, not even counting the hundreds of hours rehearsing and recording with band members spinning out of control due to emotional and drug-related situations. When "Random Violence" finally came out, Maximum RocknRoll gave it a good review and said they hoped we would be playing live a lot more in the future. Well, those days were numbered. But John Peel wrote, requesting a copy of the record after reading the MRR review. He wrote as if he was some obscure guy: "My name is John Peel and I do a radio programme for the BBC in England..." etc. Also, Jello Biafra wrote and said he had our first EP but was "blown away" by "Random Violence" and said it reminded him of Wire's "Pink Flag." So in the end, all of the grief and hassle of documenting our music on the "Random Violence" record was worth it to me. They even played it on Soviet Bloc punk radio shows where government censors had to screen every song... From another time, before emails, blogs, MP3s...

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