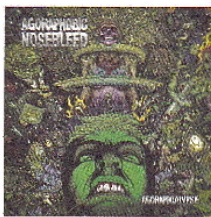


MUSIC REVIEWS



AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED

Agorapocalypse
As purveyors of sub-subgenre drum-machine grindcore, **Agoraphobic Nosebleed** has the skill and tools to venture off in any direction with each new album. 2002's *Altered States of America*

demonstrated their uncanny ability to piss people off with their 20-minute bombastic collection of exactly 100 songs while their many splits 7"s and EPs proved them to be comradic hosts and general good fellows with a number of bands including **Converge**, **Apartment 213**, and **Halo**. With *Agorapocalypse*, the Nosebleed now exercise their ability to

write more conventional, two to three minute-length songs, something Jay Randall attributed to "making the drum programming sound more realistic and less like a sound project."

The fade-in of opening track "Agorapocalypse Now" shows that the band is utilizing more patience and foresight than anytime in their 15-year history. As the drum machine lays down familiar beats (thankfully nowhere near the 1,000+ BPM heard on earlier releases), the guitars play a more utilitarian role in pushing

the vocals shared by Richard Johnson, Randall, and the newly-minted Katherine Katz (**Salome**), to their rightful place at the center of attention. While the subject matter also remains on drugs, violence, and anti-government sentiments, the delivery this time around is much cleaner, unforgiving, and undeniable in its simple ferocity. Randall explains it as "when your music sounds like you're ripping through a crowd with a hunting knife, you gotta write lyrics that fit the part." This is evidenced in "Dick to Mouth Resuscitation": "I'm giving up my ego, my desire, my vanity / All to fill one tiny need / To spread open my ass and shit on your dreams."

As the album progresses, each song melts into another, albeit with their many changes throughout. "Hung From the Rising Sun" begins with a "drum" solo opening into a pure '80s thrash throwback, a genre that Randall credits for "making [him] want to be in a band in the first place." As the listener

progresses through "Question of Integrity," "Timelord Two (Paradoxical Reaction)," and "White on White Crime," one can only smile and enjoy the new and stunningly enjoyable ANb. What was once almost cartoon-y in its intangibility, the new ANb is about making machines more human and vice versa—a newly forged relationship in what has always been the rumor of the end of everything. Although Randall still feels that "the future of grindcore is going to be a digital one," the fact remains that machines are getting closer to men so the sentiment is inevitable.

And though in 15 years Agoraphobic Nosebleed has never appeared live, with the introduction of a new album, it's natural to question whether they might in the future. "Sure, all of the drums on the record would be pretty accessible for a drummer to learn, but I just really don't see it happening," Randall says. "It would kind of diminish the name Agoraphobic a bit, don't you think?"

Ladies and gentlemen, the future of grindcore has begun and there is nothing, as Randall calmly puts it, "more absurd or ugly or beserk...." [LR]

Agoraphobic Nosebleed: www.agoraphobicnosebleed.com

Relapse Records: www.relapse.com