Dead Meadow – Old Growth (2008)



1 Aint' Got Nothing (To Go Wrong) 6:58
2 Between Me and the Ground 3:15
3 What Needs Must Be 4:16
4 Down Here 2:43
5 'Till Kingdom Come 4:05
6 I'm Gone 4:13 play
7 Seven Seers 4:20 play
8 The Great Deceiver 3:06
9 The Queen of All Returns 5:33
10 Keep on Walking 3:01
11 Hard People/Hard Times 4:22
12 Either Way 10:20
- Jason Simon - guitar, vocals - Cory Shane - guitar - Steve Kille - bass - Stephen McCarty - drums

Dead Meadow's fifth studio album, and their third for Matador Records, was recorded in two locations: Sunset Sound, a 50-year-old studio on the Sunset Strip, rumored to be haunted by Jim Morrison's ghost, and in a restored abandoned Indiana guest house next door to the farmhouse of drummer Stephen McCarty's parents -- where the band first recorded Howls from the Hills. Potential for a doomy throwback to their early works seemed high, with the latter space boasting 14-foot ceilings perfect for massive drum reverb, old cupboards, and closets for isolation rooms, and surrounding a bottom-lit brick well in the center of the kitchen to make shadows dance while mysterious ghost stories circulated about the shack. As legend has it, a park ranger who rented the secluded space prior to the recording pulled his gun on hand prints that were making their way towards him across the carpet in the middle of the night, and supposedly, as a result of the eerie environment, if you listen carefully, you can hear paranormal sounds bleeding through on some of the guitar tracks, along with footsteps and violin noises coming from nowhere. The spooky back-stories that portray the setting of the album as the cabin from Evil Dead, and cover art that depicts a claustrophobic forest would lead

one to believe that this is going to be a stoner rock throwback to the fear-inducing lumbering thunder of Sabbath and Blue Cheer. Unfortunately, fans of Dead Meadow's pummeling self-titled album will be disappointed in the lack of bombast, as now the DC trio is continuing down their path of laid-back entrancement that was becoming all-too comfortable on 2005's Floyd-esque Feathers. There's still a woozy taste of psychedelia in the air, even though most of the songs now fall under the five-minute mark, with most of the grunge saved for the guitar solos. Frontman and guitar slinger Jason Simon still wails on his wah when time permits, but he sounds more apathetic than ever while singing, and the songs are more compact than before, resulting in what feels a lot like a blues-rock version of Spiritualized. Some moments specialize in the plodding groove ("Til Kingdom Come"), some are more experimental and trippy, like the tanpura drone and frantic build of "Seven Seers," others are surprisingly quaint acoustic based numbers like "Down Here." Where the group used to sound like a bulldozer demolishing rubble, now they're more like a snow plow gently shoving away a winter wonderland. It's still good, but isn't stoner rock supposed to sound destructive? ---Jason Lymangrover, AllMusic Review

Muzykę Dead Meadow początkowo klasyfikowano jako coś, co może pogodzić miłośników klasycznego psychodelicznego rocka spod znaku Pink Floyd, fanów gitarowych riffów Black Sabbath oraz zwolenników stonerskich transów, wychowanych na Kyuss. Dziś już nie całkiem to się sprawdza, bo od czasu ukazania się „Feathers" nastąpiło wyraźne przesunięcie się w stronę bardziej „tradycyjnych" gitarowych brzmień bluesowych, zresztą wyśmienicie wyegzekwowanych („Ain't Got Nothing [To Go Wrong]", „Between Me And The Ground", „The Great Deceiver"), no i chyba w ogóle w stronę bardziej zrelaksowanego mainstreamowego rockowego grania, charakterystycznego dla tradycji Zachodniego Wybrzeża. Na „Old Growth" jest jednak większe zróżnicowanie stylistyczne: zaznacza się tu także wpływ folk-rocka („Down Here", „Either Way"), może jakieś echo Marka Lanegana („What Needs Must Be"), nie zabrakło również małego wypadu w stronę hinduskich klimatów („Seven Seers"), a jeśli chodzi o budowanie majestatycznych hymnowych brzmień, to po wysłuchaniu „Till Kingdom Come" tacy wykonawcy jak choćby U2 powinni pomyśleć o emeryturze. ---Adi51

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