Sonic Jesus – Grace (2017)



1 I'm In Grace 4:34 2 I Hope 4:02 3 Modern Model 4:39 4 September 9th 4:21 5 No Way 4:40 6 Space Heels 5:22 7 Outdoor 3:29 8 Funeral Party 3:43 9 Stars 4:12 10 Fading Lights 4:54 Drums, Bass, Guitar, Synthesizer, Vocals – Tiziano Veronese Guitar, Lap Steel Guitar – Marco Barzetti

What's in a name? That's probably not a question which Italian multi-instrumentalist Tiziano Veronese asked himself before deciding to perform under a moniker which does pretty much suggest that he's the metaphysical offspring of Brian Eno, Kevin Shields and Delia Derbyshire.

Needless to say, that's not a description which Veronese finds very easy to live up to, but on the other hand there is something beautiful and charming amidst the dark noise which he creates. Everything on 'Grace' comes served with a low, growling, bassline and pounding drums, over which Veronese's distorted vocals make him sound like a soap opera character having a nervous breakdown. And yet one of the most interesting things about this record is that no two songs truly sound the same.

Opener 'I'm In Grace' is so heavy and spiritual that it could be a newly ordained priest happily swimming in treacle, whilst 'Modern Model' is disconcertingly light on its feet before gradually getting deeper and darker, as Veronese mutters about healing sorrows. Similarly, 'Outdoors' is defiantly uptempo, with a nice piano melody buried in there, but best of all is 'Space Heels', which could be a forgotten Joy Division classic; it's the one song where you can say that all of the parts of Veronese's ambition finally mesh together.

There's one fly in the ointment, though. The lyrics to Sonic Jesus' music are apparently not

written by Veronese himself, but by touring guitarist Marco Barzetti – and it is as if Veronese either doesn't have enough confidence in them, or in his own command of English, to sing them. Too often you can catch the first part of a line but not the conclusion, and it's bloody frustrating. Nowhere is this more apparent than on 'Funeral Party', a fast-paced, Editors-esque, number which would be superb if Veronese didn't keep repeating "inside we're always…" and then mumbling to himself. Inside you're always what, mate? Happy? Depressed? Squishier than on the outside? JUST TELL US!

If we were judging this album purely on the music alone it would definitely merit a higher mark, but we've knocked at least one off for just being too obscure and annoying. ---Richard O'Hagan, littleindieblogs.blogspot.com

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