

Geezer - Geezer (2016)

Wpisany przez bluesever
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1 *Sunday Speed Demon* 3:19 2 *One Leg Up* 6:27 3 *Sun Gods* 9:29 4 *Bi-Polar Vortex* 9:00 5 *Dust* 8:02 6 *Hangnail Crisis* 5:32 7 *Superjam Maximus* 5:59 8 *Stoney Pony* 4:29
Bass Guitar – Richie Touseull Drums – Chris Turco Guitar [Additional Guitars] – Matthew Cullen Guitar, Vocals – Pat Harrington

It was exceedingly difficult to argue with the idea when New York heavy blues jammers Geezer opted to take their 2013 Gage EP and build it out into a second full-length the next year as their debut on STB Records and the follow-up to their self-released first outing, *Electrically Handmade Heavy Blues*. Since then, they've remained prolific. The Gage LP (review here) came out through STB and Ripple Music, and Geezer went on to release the *Live! Full Tilt Boogie* (review here) tape that same year as well as the 2015 digi-single "Long Dull Knife" (discussed here) before also taking part in the first installment of Ripple Music's *The Second Coming of Heavy* series of limited split LPs, working alongside Washington D.C.'s *Borracho* (review here).

On some level or other, each new outing has marked a step forward in the trio's progression, and this encouraging trend continues on their self-titled LP (also through Ripple and STB), which presents 51 minutes of new material across an eight-track stretch that plays between straightforward mega-fuzzed bounce and expansive jamming as the three-piece of guitarist/vocalist Pat Harrington, bassist Richie Touseull and drummer Chris Turco ooze their way through extended fluidity on "Sun Gods," "Bi-Polar Vortex" and "Dust," a sort of jamming trilogy that follows the more straightforward opening duo "Sunday Speed Demon" and "One Leg Up" and ends up making a major statement in the personality of the album as a whole, despite a measure of sonic variety in itself. Worship of tone, the stellar fretwork and graveling voice of Harrington and the nod from Touseull and Turco regardless of tempo tie the songs together as Geezer step into their own, and if it's not a coincidence that their third long-player is self-titled and the statement they're making is this is who they are as a unit, then the confidence that signals in their approach is well justified.

They begin at a boogie clip with “Sunday Speed Demon,” the shortest inclusion at 3:19, and continue to push through with strong momentum as Turco’s drums lead the way into “One Leg Up.” Other reviews have called out the latter track’s lyrics as sexist. The band has countered saying context is everything. I won’t argue with either side. The artwork they had for the digital single didn’t do much to help their case, and while we’re citing the politically suspect, closer “Stoney Pony” fits right in as well. One could debate endlessly about how Uncle Acid get to write songs about murdering women and have it called aesthetic artistry while Geezer tap into “My girl’s built like a pony” and it’s not. I don’t care to. “One Leg Up” is almost woefully catchy, however — for that matter, so is “Stoney Pony” — and by being almost twice as long as the opener and departing into a dreamy wah solo in its midsection, it effectively smooths the path into the drifting “Sun Gods,” the 9:25 highlight of Geezer’s Geezer and the first part of the aforementioned trilogy of jammers with “Bi-Polar Vortex” (8:56) and “Dust” (7:59) behind it, the former perhaps the most spaced-out of the three and the latter finding ground in part thanks to a hook referencing Queens of the Stone Age’s “Long Slow Goodbye.”

It’s important to note that although each of the record’s “big three” have this unfolding grandeur, they’re also memorable thanks to an underlying core of songwriting. Geezer have proven time and again to be ace jammers as few East Coast acts are — the deluxe edition of the self-titled comes accompanied by the bonus LP A Flagrant Disregard for Happiness (premiered here); a single-song half-hour semi-improvised work that further drives the point home — but as the slow-rolling “Dust” begins the shift back to more structured vibes that will continue through “Hangnail Crisis,” “Superjam Maximus” and “Stoney Pony,” their blend of the ethereal and the terrestrial is seamless and their flow once again seems to be the realization of what their progression to this point has been driving toward. Again, Geezer’s Geezer indeed.

I’m not sure where the LP actually splits — if it’s four tracks on each side and “Dust” starts side B” or if “Stoney Pony” is a CD-only cut; it has kind of a bonus-track-y feel to it, almost tacked on — but it’s clear as the guitar starts “Hangnail Crisis” that the album has entered the last of its three movements. Think of it as a trip out and back. You start on the ground, launch, and return. That’s not to say the roll of “Hangnail Crisis” or the layered lead work late in the surprisingly uptempo “Superjam Maximus” don’t have their hypnotic aspects, but it’s no less of a palpable turn than that into “Sun Gods” from “One Leg Up” despite the work Harrington, Touseull and Turco do to ease the transition. When they commence, the starts and stops of “Stoney Pony” offer one last bounce and nod to the listener and another catchy, bluesy chorus, which isn’t really anything that “Hangnail Crisis,” “Superjam Maximus,” or for that matter “Sunday Speed Demon” and “One Leg Up,” didn’t accomplish, but neither does it detract from the outing overall, which maintains its fluidity right up to the end.

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Geezer's third album isn't perfect — nor is it intended to be — and while I don't believe a group who base so much of what they do around improvisation and songs developed therefrom necessarily finishes growing at any given point, I do think this is the moment at which Geezer have locked into and demonstrated clear intent toward a multifaceted style that engages the listener with deceptive variety and consistent, high-quality songcraft. On a sheer performance level, they've never sounded better, whether that's the increased confidence and melodic range in Harrington's vocals, the blend of fuzz in the bass and guitar or the manner in which any player at any point seems ready to take the fore. Considering that in combination with the strength of the material they're putting forth, it becomes even easier to see their self-titled marking Geezer's true arrival as a band. ---theobelisk.ne

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