

The Orangeburg Massacre "Moorea" CD

It's always interesting to read about and then hear a band that combines good music with an intelligent voice. Whether this is exhibited in the way the members approach their music or write their lyrics, it should be noteworthy in a scene where a band's true intentions are commonly hidden by the public masks they wear. Although The Orangeburg Massacre's songs are fairly straightforward as far as technical metal/hardcore goes, I'd like to believe that these fellas are honest with their peaceful persona. Upon opening up the band's debut album for Pluto Records, *Moorea*, there is a hand-written note from the band explaining why they chose their band name (in honor of the real Orangeburg massacre) and how it affects their mission as a band. An honorable trait indeed. With that said, there was one line that jumped out at me while listening to vocalist Brandon Barron's lyrics during the song "Crooked Tooth Storyteller." Here, Barron screams the line "my words, described so meticulously for everyone to see so plain/ but with the best encoding I can design." By taking on this somewhat cocky facade, it's like the band is saying, "We've got this awesome mission to inform our listeners of important topics, but we're going to hide it all in metaphor that you won't understand." Perhaps this is digging a bit too deep into The Orangeburg Massacre's rhetoric considering the actual songs on *Moorea* are simply intense hardcore/metal tunes at their core. *Moorea* is a riff-driven record with riffs that come in many forms. You'll encounter relaxed, melodic tones in "Serenity Far Far Later;" a southern style in "Bryan V Darrow;" and the pulsating kind of riffs in "The Catacombs." And then there's simply the hectic style that's heard in the opener "Archipelago." At times The Orangeburg Massacre reminds me of Misery Signals ("Altruism") and even Scarlet ("The Catacombs"), yet their gritty rock influence ("The Great Western Train Chase") negates any all-encompassing comparisons. Barron's vocal performance is solid; he smoothly transitions from a piercing scream to a gruff singing tone throughout the album, giving the vocal performance a bit of added diversity. Overall, The Orangeburg Massacre is a decent band with potential both musically and intellectually. If they can hone in both these traits, I could see them fitting comfortably on a roster like Ferret's in the future. (Pluto Records > Plutorecords.com) Corey Schmidt