

THE FLAMING LIPS THE TERROR

DID GOD MAKE PAIN SO WE CAN KNOW THE HIGH THAT NOTHING IS??



WHAT IS THE TERROR??

It is a strange thing when humans are very sad, the stories and music they want to hear is not hopeful or happy; they want to hear SAD stories and music...so we suppose happy people wanna hear happy things maybe we only hear ourselves or we only LISTEN to ourselves Well, then, what had happened to us? Why would we make this music that is The Terror - this bleak, disturbing, hopeless record...?? I don't really want to know the answer that I think is coming: that WE were hopelessWE were disturbed (but we didn't have a longing to NOT be disturbed) and, I think, accepting that some things are hopeless...or letting hope in one area die so that hope can start to live in another?? Maybe this is the beginning of the answer.

Making music is such a haphazard activity, especially when done by a group. The individuals each have their own states of mind and each are, in a sense, listening to or hearing only themselves and so it can be a mishmash of moods or sounds or themes depending on the members' assertiveness or their ability to conquer others (ha ha). It is a wonder that anything gets expressed (or maybe it is BECAUSE of these different agendas that music is, sometimes, its MOST expressive) It's a motherfucker and a mystery.

So toward the end of the mad frenzy that was the "Heady Fwends" collaboration record, a second studio was being used to record in while the main studio was being used to mix in. And often the demands of the main studio would be so overwhelming that when we would retreat, starting sometimes at 1:00 in the morning, to the second studio, our music would be made in a kind of sleepwalker's dimension...meaning, lead only by pure desire, pleasure and curiosity. All creations, if you are lucky, begin like this. They can quickly turn unpleasurable but that's the nature of all production. So when "The Terror" was beginning to take shape, Steven and I were determined to navigate around this drudgery of production, trying our best to keep every moment, every sound, every word as it happened in this "sleep walker's dimension". You see, we weren't really trying to make a new record and we were being completely self indulgent.

We started to be affected by this music eventually affected so much that we could not tolerate any other music we had an inflated sense of self-importance and belief that this music this sound this mood is all that will ever matter to us from now on. Being obsessed is fun!!

But The Terror is NOT fun...

CHAOS, CONTROL, CHANGE... REPEAT

What we can't control... if you are like me... we try to control. What we can change, we try to change... And so, maybe when we are immersed in chaos for too long, we long for stability or control. And maybe when we have control for too long, we have a desire for chaos. Or maybe we are just hungry worms... yeah... worms that are a thousand feet long... and we are eating our own tail... but we don't know that, yeah, when we HAVE control, we fear LOSING control... but we think we WANT control... and then chaos comes in and shows us that, if we had control, our lives would be safe... or predictable...or boring??? We create the chaos BECAUSE we have control... Fuck!! Like I said (or like I feared), we are hungry worms...

LOOK, THE SUN IS RISING!!

For a long time in our life, when we were young, we lived as though there were eyes watching us from above not GOD, but a super entity; not a super entity that cared about truth or justice, just a watcher. After that, we lived for a long time believing the universe has made us yeah!! but the rest is up to us. And then paranoia seemed useful again and for a short time during the making of "The Terror", we believed that eyes from beyond were once again watching over us. We longed to have no control of our lives... we tried to believe UFOs were hovering and watching us... we wanted to believe there was a conspiracy of fake truth and that we were being kept hostage by an unknown overpowering enemy and that our only escape was internal... we went inside ourselves. Where we know what is real... but once we went internal, we discovered we were empty and scared and we once again confided in the underlying truth that LOVE will save us yes, LOVE will save us. But The Terror?? The Terror is that LOVE is not the magic gravity, the sun of suns... We want, or wanted, to believe that without love we would disappear; that love, somehow, would save us that, yeah, if we have love, give love and know love, we are truly alive and if there is no love, there would be no life The Terror is, we know now, that even without love, life goes on... we just go on... there is no mercy killing.

Peace,
Wayne



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WE DON'T CONTROL THE CONTROLS



LOOK... THE SUN IS RISING

WAYNE: I know this is normally an optimistic statement: "look...the sun is rising!!"...but here, it signals the enemy...like the way a vampire dreads the dawn.

There is a time at 4 or 5 or 6 in the morning when, after you've been up all night, there is sense that you have escaped from your life...from your routines...from your responsibilities...but you don't know it; you are just floating unaware of the fake freedom you are experiencing...and then you look over your shoulder and you catch a glimpse of the horrible solar rule - the rule that says, "a new day will come"...the rule that says, "time marches on".

We are, if we are lucky, obedient slaves to the wonderful sun... but, yeah...we are slaves...we owe everything to it...and we know we cannot escape it.

When the sun comes up, it means the world is awake again and that I must be awake again...awake again to the truths that the sun has taught us: that nothing lasts forever... that everything dies. But love can burn more brightly and more intensely despite knowing this.

It's a motherfucker...we love life even more when we know it is going from us...

BE FREE, A WAY

WAYNE: We've learned not to be tricked. We've learned nothing is obvious. We know that even on the warmest most perfect days, there is still pain. "Did God make pain so we can know the high that nothing is?"

We can only know true great joy when it is sitting next to pain and suffering, otherwise it is immersed in the blinding light of everyday living. When we are trying to escape all pain and suffering, we don't realize we are also escaping from the wonder of happiness and the bliss of living!! There is fear: we fear we will not be loved...and the second we are loved we fear we will lose it. We go from fighting to have it to fighting to keep it. Where and when and how are we ever free....??

The only freedom we can ever experience is when we don't WANT to be free...

STEVEN: A key change up a perfect 4th at the chorus lifts this simple chant from doubt to certainty- from questions to affirmations....

TRY TO EXPLAIN

WAYNE: The agony of the mind left without any explanation...searching, raging!!...searching and never finding anything...trying to understand...searching, not out of anger, but out of desperation to know what to feel.

The sonic equivalent to Edvard Munch's The Scream.....!!

STEVEN: One of the few songs on the record with a "normal" chord progression, the low oscillating synth clouds the minor/major drama underneath. Desperate plea in the Air Supply vein.

YOU LUST

WAYNE: A sinister mechanical response to letting oneself get overtaken...a kind of religious, un-building, relentless, crawling, strange head song dissolving into eerie abstract pieces of electronic mumblings...

STEVEN: The lack of any chord changes keeps this piece suspended in tension, never resolving to a relative or parallel major chord. The voice "solo" in the middle explores 2 different modes on the root of somewhere between Dflat and D. The overall effect is disturbing and unrewarding....

THE TERROR

WAYNE: Probably the bleakest yet one of the most soothing, songs we've ever created.... it admits to finally acknowledging that love.. in the end .. does not save us... It is a joyous kind of melancholy .."We'll sing in the sunshine... We'll laugh everyday.. We'll sing cause love will save us.. The sun shine every day"... sung as knowing that love is as high as we ever want to be... To give love and to be loved is the highest high...but to go beyond love... what is beyond love???? life is beyond love...the sun shines down on us everyday and in most of its glorious dimensions it tells us that life is beautiful and full of hope... But some of its rays tell us another truth... that life is ending that things are rotting... there is dread... that it is a universe of chaos.. we don't control the controls...

YOU ARE ALONE

WAYNE: "Then I have no goodness left in me. Then I'll have to live beyond reality's dream."

A strange drone chant accepting that, at our purest base instincts, we are not about love; we are about lust and power and evil, and that we act for our own rewards and our own pleasures.

We want to live purely... but we want to live a life of love. Love is not pure, it is a power of the mind.

STEVEN: The musical starting point of The Terror. The wonderful freedom of no chord changes: a main vocal melody and 2 recurring synth melodies over a synthetic, disconnected loop, creating a whole picture of fear and aloneness....

BUTTERFLY, HOW LONG IT TAKES TO DIE

WAYNE: An intense mystical flourish signals each twist toward chaos. When we really look at birth, we can also see death.

TURNING VIOLENT

WAYNE: We try to understand violence and threats against us. We are paranoid and try to protect ourselves. We are usually the most evil to those we love. To cause pain to our brothers and sisters is in our nature.

We hold it in...we hold it in. Eventually, inevitably, it explodes.

STEVEN: Another moment of minor key self-realization using only Wasp bass synth and damaged electronic pulses as a beginning background. The distorted organ hits sound like the word "violent".

ALWAYS THERE... IN OUR HEARTS

WAYNE: An internal mantra that confronts every corrupt corner in our hidden souls. We know deep inside all of us is an insane merciless monster that is capable of the worst crimes imaginable. We speak of love, but know that it comes with pain...and, as much as we want to be guided by love, we know at our core that we don't really have control of ourselves. We are strangers even to ourselves. We are self-destructive and scared and never really understand ourselves.

The last line is the most punishing: "Always there, in our hearts, joy for life that overwhelms." Why is that punishing?? Because to really live life, motherfuckers, is to go all the way!! All the way in. And, when we go all the way in, we start to smell the shit and the decay...and if you're turned off by the smell of shit and the awareness of decay, you may want to just sit on the sidelines and watch...but the joy of life will not be at its zenith. To have our greatest joy is to risk our greatest pain. Let the joy overwhelm us: that's the way I want to live. But I know that means the pain may overwhelm me too. So we live in the middle grey zone where we don't have too much to gain or too much to lose???? FUCK THAT!!



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