

UNDER THE RADAR

September 2014



Death From Above 1979

The Physical World
(WARNER BROS.)

★★★★★★★☆☆ 7/10

Death From Above 1979 pick up right where they left off...uh, holy shit, *10 years ago*. And lo, a collective "holy shit" was uttered across the Internet when they announced a reunion, and still one more this July with the appearance of single "Trainwreck 1979." And the good news is the fellas didn't miss a beat, despite all that time off. They're still delivering that winning blend of dance-punk energy with classic-rock aplomb, and it still feels plenty fresh. We might even just consult the history books and reuse some 2004 record-reviewer equation-style descriptors—did anybody throw down a "Billy Squier's Liars"? Dibs.

Opener "Cheap Talk" is a great selection for a resounding "we're back." Sebastien Grainger remains a master of the rock vocal hook—not to mention a wicked, hyped-up drummer—and Jesse Keeler is still adept at massive, fuzzed-out, melody-carrying basslines. The duo are as locked in as ever, still packing peak intensity into three-minute gems—get in, kick ass, get out.

"Right On, Frankenstein!" is another example, replete with hard-rock fist-pumping and an absurdly catchy bridge hook of "I don't wanna die but I wanna be buried/Meet me at the gates of the cemetery." There's plenty of *heavy* throughout the album. Perhaps there's a little residual riff inspiration from those Queens of the Stone Age opening spots (Keeler even drops some full-on Sabbath-like pentatonic runs throughout "Always On" and doom-metal-worthy low-end rumbles on the title track).

"White Is Red," for its part, is cut from a different cloth: a big FM radio ballad, with Keeler delivering a wistful set of chords and Grainger getting all Kip Winger on the lyrical front: "Frankie was a heartbreaker/I didn't know it at the start/She was only 16/And she went and broke my heart." Feeling the romance? Somebody call up Lovefoxxx and the rest of CSS and let them know it's safe to make love again. (www.deathfromabove1979.com)

By J. Pace