

Written by **Drew Tewksbury**

D E A T H
...FOR THE WHOLE WORLD TO SEE

<DRAG CITY>

In 1971, brothers David, Bobby, and Dannis Hackney cooked up Death in their Detroit garage. Little did they know that more than three decades later, their efforts would become the stuff of music lore.



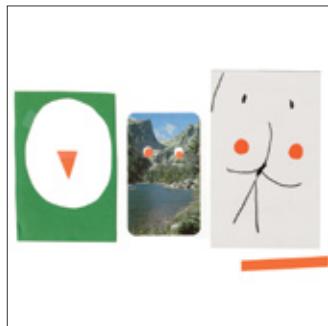
Death's album, set for release thirty-eight years after the band's birth, is now a must-have for proto-punk enthusiasts. (For the metalhead who is accidentally reading this magazine while using a few pages to wipe up spilled bong water: No, this is not the Floridian band started by the father of death metal, Chuck Schuldiner.) As African-American garage rockers ("punk" wasn't a musical phylum until years later), the Hackney brothers were ahead of their time. Their music—original and raw with socially conscious lyrics—stands miles apart from the sound of Detroit's Motown explosion. Funkadelic producer Don Davis recorded *...For the Whole World to See* in 1974 and captured Death's hard-groove sound—some of it siphoned from Detroit's own MC5. Soon Clive Davis, head honcho of Columbia Records from 1967 to 1973, wanted to sign the band, but only if they changed the name. The Hackneys refused, broke up the band, and moved to Vermont (how punk!). Bobby and Dannis would go on to form the reggae band Lamsbread. The story of Death would have ended here, but their anachronistic, punk-ish sound has piqued the interest of record collectors dredging the Internet for rare recordings of a few songs from the band. Death's bass-heavy "Politicians in My Eyes" grooves

with the speed of Bad Brains, but came out years before the oft-cited black punk progenitors. Indie label Drag City now presents a first listen to Death's visionary album and offers the band's hyperkinetic, drum-driven freak rock as the perfect catalyst to rock faces in your grandmama's romper room and kick your cat right in the whiskers.

T H E S E A R E P O W E R S
A L L A B O A R D F U T U R E

<DEAD OCEANS>

If the avant-garde is dead, then These Are Powers plays in its graveyard. These ghostly dancescapes, although not exactly avant-garde, certainly toe the line of experimentalism, if the term actually means anything anymore. After all, "experimental" music (as many bands choose to label their sounds on MySpace) is a nebulous catchall for music that breaks convention or involves supposed never-before-heard sounds. These Are Powers employs both tactics; but it's all too easy to lump the band in with the (comparatively) newly recognized "experimental" bands Fuck Buttons, Wolf Eyes, and countless other sound torturers from Brooklyn. Instead, These Are Powers ground the electronic manipulations and guitar groans with (mostly) steady sub-bass lines, making evocative dance music that is equally introspective and head-nod worthy. *All Aboard Future* is not just something you throw on while cooking buckwheat pancakes. The subtle industrial drum thumps push the consciousness into tribal territory. And yes, that means this is mind-bending music. "Adam's Turtle" mixes atmospheric mutations of eyeball-headed experimentalists

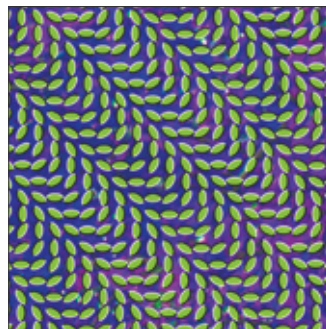


The Residents with a sparse, glitch-hop beat. The eerie toy-piano tinklings of "Sand Tassels" and the haunting lyrics "there are waves blowing up against my window" swirl in a murky aural tide pool. If These Are Powers could even have a single, "Easy Answers" would be it. The tribal sub-bass pulsates over mangled melody as singer Anna Barie's swaggering vocals channel P J Harvey: "Don't you forget about me baby, 'cause I ain't forget about you, you, you." Don't worry, Anna. You're entirely unforgettable.

A N I M A L C O L L E C T I V E
M E R R I W E A T H E R P O S T P A V I L I O N

<DOMINO>

An Animal Collective album usually takes some time. Call your secretary, cancel your afternoon meetings. Take a rain check for that dinner date, tell your girl you're staying in. Animal Collective albums hijack your life. But on *Merriveather Post Pavilion* the collective offers its most accessible release to date. The bouncing beats of "My Girls"



melt into nursery-rhyme vocals that coalesce in a transcendent chorus complete with handclaps. It's a hipster religious revival, certain to be engorged with hyperbole spouted by museo-geeks everywhere. But don't worry about being a lemming for *Merriveather Post Pavilion*. Just dive into the uplifting effervescence of an album that brims with optimism and feels so damn good. Enjoy.

A M A D O U + M A R I A M
W E L C O M E T O M A L I

<BECAUSE MUSIC / NONESUCH RECORDS>

Amadou Bagayoko and Mariam Doumbia live in a world where



sound is everything. They met as teenagers at the Institute for the Young Blind in the West African nation of Mali, where Doumbia cultivated her blithe, songbird voice and Bagayoko developed his playful guitar plucking. They fell in love soon after, and, in 1980, they married and became known as "the blind couple from Mali." Now, with *Welcome to Mali*, Bagayoko and Doumbia's poppy African rhythms are infused with an electro-pop aesthetic that eschews expectations of music from the duo's home continent. The track "Sabali" is produced by Damon Albarn, former Blur frontman and Gorillaz mastermind, who gently lays Doumbia's wafting vocals adrift over synthy keyboard arpeggios and a subtly pulsing kick drum. Unlike Albarn's Gorillaz project, Bagayoko and Doumbia lack kitschiness and, instead, capture a feeling absent from many releases in the early 2000s: genuineness. Their last album received the professional treatment from Latin superstar producer Manu Chao, and *Welcome to Mali* serves more of the funk soup that Chao whipped up on that record. Mixing irresistibly dance-y West African instrumentation and up-tempo dub with subtle electro, *Welcome to Mali* is the hub of many disparate musical styles. But every single song moves and quakes with near-flawless construction. On "Magossa," Bagayoko's guitar strums play against the stutter-stepping bass and dance with a delicate, floating flute line. *Welcome to Mali* repackages African music for the twenty-first century—and for an audience that sees the limitless possibilities and interplay of a global culture. Bagayoko and Doumbia have the vision.