

CARTOON DARKNESS ALBUM REVIEW

Melbourne's home-grown punk rockers Amyl and The Sniffers release their third studio album, 'Cartoon Darkness'.



Amy Taylor and Co (Image: John Angus Stewart)

'Amyl' – As in amyl nitrate, a party drug commonly referred to as 'poppers'. Coming in a tiny bottle, you sniff the liquid inside and are sent into a euphoric state for a short moment. Melbourne punk rockers Amyl and the Sniffers continue to live up to their name on their third album 'Cartoon Darkness', with each song creating a sensational high for the listener.

Never has an album ever opened so dramatically as Cartoon Darkness kicks off with 'Jerkin'. It is an unbelievably crass introduction to the album, with the kind of lyricism that would give your grandmother a heart attack – and it's perfect. Serving as a big 'fuck you' to the online trolls that send hate towards firecracker frontwoman Amy Taylor, her snarky vocals show off that she is not a force to be reckoned with.

Multiple songs on this album follow suit with the theme of the opening track, such as 'Tiny Bikini', in which Taylor expresses that she will dress however she chooses to, or 'U Should Not Be Doing That', where Taylor criticises the people telling her what she can and can't do. The "don't tell me how to act" theme is very prominent throughout the punk genre, and can feel a little overdone at times, but Taylor and the band deliver these messages to the audience with so much energy you could compare it to being slapped in the face.

Musically, the band deliver a more melodic approach to this album compared to their previous releases, while still managing to convey the classic Amyl and the Sniffers sound we all know and love. From starting out on Bandcamp to playing international music festivals, the band have never dared to stray from their in-your-face Aussie punk sound, even after they moved to Los Angeles. Cartoon Darkness further proves the versatility of the band, such as the addition of a howling saxophone in 'U Should Not Be Doing That', adding another layer of complexity to the punk power ballads. Songs 'Pigs' and 'It's Mine' showcase frenetic guitar riffs and energetic drumming that beautifully compliment the frantic yelling from Taylor.

Though, when listening to the album in chronological order, 'It's Mine' is a bit of a shock to the system after hearing the sombre track 'Big Dreams'. Over subdued guitar arpeggios, Taylor sets forth a softer side to her vocal range, lamenting the feeling of failed ambition and encouraging the listener to act on their dreams. In a similar vein, the track 'Bailing On Me' is a welcome interlude that shares Taylor's feelings of heartbreak before she returns to the peak of her confidence.

'Cartoon Darkness' is nothing short of a cocky punk rock masterpiece, and has absolutely solidified the band's position in the punk rock hall of fame.