

JAWBOX-bio

"Basically, the process of having a band has always been a way of shouting that, as an individual, I am worth something and my voice should be heard. The social climate is such that we sit and receive and consume and are discouraged from believing that we have any worth. I feel like if I didn't have a band, I'd definately go insane." (J. ROBBINS / JAWBOX)

Like a boom box blasting at a busy construction site, JAWBOX presents a musical version of fin de siecle information overload. The quartett's palette encompasses bright streaks of melody, driving rhythms, crunching post punk guitars, and broad swatches of chaos and noise - all of which is showcased on "FOR YOUR OWN SPECIAL SWEETHEART" , JAWBOX's debut City Slang album and third longplayer overall. The majority of the material on this record was composed in the band's basement over a period of a year and a half. Most of the songs were road tested, with few more tunes penned during the weeks leading up to the recording of the album. "We always want to write songs with hooks," J. notes, "but the problems we pose for ourselves is to come up with different definitions of what a hook is. It isn't always hooky vocal lines; it might be some guitar noise, or a weird rhythmic thing."

Recorded at OZ studios in Baltimore, the album was produced by Ted Nicely (Fugazi, Girls Against Boys) and JAWBOX. "We've known Ted for a while", says J. "His records sound really great, but they also sound like a Ted Nicely production. It's the ideal approach."

"FOR YOUR OWN SPECIAL SWEETHEART" kicks off in maximum overdrive with "FF=66", which features J. spitting out schizophrenic lyrics to the roar of over-the-top-guitars. Other key jaw breakers include: "SAVORY", a melodic meditation on objectification, relationships, and remorse; "Green Glass", a tension-filled ballad; "Cruel Swing", and the drone, clang, and roar of the shakespearean titled "Cooling Card".

JAWBOX was formed in 1989 by J. Robbins, bassist from Government Issue, the seminal Washington D.C. hardcore band; Kim Coletta, a Georgetown U. graduate, whose roots were in the Boston music scene; and drummer Adam Wade. Taking their name from an obsolete piece of scottish slang, JAWBOX released their eponymous debut EP in 1990 on the Desoto label, with distribution help from Dischord Records, the legendary D.C. label run by Fugazi founder Ian MacKaye.

"Desoto is really cool", J. comments. "Edsel (a D.C. band) started the label to put their fist single out, and we thought, `Let`s keep this label alive`" Today, JAWBOX`s Kim and Bill run DeSoto, which has released eight singles by various bands.

Meanwhile, JAWBOX themselves moved over to Dischord proper, which put out two albums and three 7" singles over the next three years.

"GRIPPE", released in `91, was JAWBOX`s first full length outing.

Praised in Spin: "A weird, melodic, emotional trip. Sometimes rock, sometimes punk, sometimes both, `GRIPPE` is full of smooth vocals that glide along with tight, powerful guitar, ferocious bass-slapping, and no-bullshit drums."

`92 saw JAWBOX add guitarist/vocalist Bill Barbot to the line-up in time to create a denser sound for "NOVELTY", their second album. With the record garnering considerable college airplay, JAWBOX kept busy with a non-stop touring schedule that started in `89 and continues to generate press raves to this day.

When Adam departed in May `92 to join Shudder To Think, Zach Barocas took over the drumming duties, ushering in a new era for the group with his contributions to both the rythm section and songwriting. "Since Zach has been in the band, it`s been this great revitalizing thing", says J. "because we can write a lot more by jamming."

Which brings us to `94 and "FOR YOUR OWN SPECIAL SWEETHEART." A jolting collection of songs that runs the gamut from harsh to poignant (sometimes within the same tune), it reflects the skewed but earnest world view of this unique outfit.

"If someone asks us about what one of our songs are about", says J. "we`re likely to give a smart-assed answer like It`s about being a song. JAWBOX is really into the idea that people could hear our lyrics completely `wrong` and come up with their own interpretation, based on something that isn`t even there. I think that is a by-product of the creative process."



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