**Guerilla Toss**

***You’re Weird Now***

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When NYC-based experimental dance punks since time immemorial (okay, since 2011) Guerilla Toss were in Vermont recording new full-length *You’re Weird Now*, Kassie Carlson would make what she called “punk lunch,” a communal meal where the Guerilla Toss frontwoman would raid the studio fridge for whatever was left to “put on the table…and [make] a sandwich of the most random ingredients ever.”

Regularly joining punk lunch were two weird music legends in their own respective worlds: Stephen Malkmus (Pavement, The Jicks….not sure who I’m explaining this to) and Trey Anastasio, Phish guitarist and owner of The Barn, the recording studio owned where Guerilla Toss (no strangers to the “weird music” tag themselves”) were making *You’re Weird Now* with Malkmus in the producer seat. (Engineer Bryce Goggin, who's worked with Malkmus since *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain,* was also part of the crew.)

While the idea of the guy from Phish and the guy from Pavement sitting around with Guerilla Toss congenially assembling sandwiches from random foodstuffs dug up from the bowels of a studio fridge might seem absurd, it also makes total sense. Because really, if there is any band who is the natural bridge between slacker punks who saw Pavement way before you did and wild-eyed wooks who’ve seen Phish more times than you ever will (and let’s throw in the eccentrics in 90s drip following one-time GT tourmates Primus around, as well), it could only be Guerilla Toss, a band so imaginative and consistently *themselves* that they’re basically the IRL manifestation of a utopian post-snob world where all musical ideas are worthy of expression and everyone is welcome.

This is the message powering Y*ou’re Weird Now,* Guerilla Toss’ fifth album and second for Sub Pop. A hugely creative and joyful statement about the joy of creativity, with *You’re Weird Now* Guerilla Toss reclaim the word “weird” for everyone brave enough to let their freak flag fly and stay true to their artistic vision no matter what—a way riskier act than it’s ever given credit for, and one that requires a certain amount of serene self-confidence that it takes time and effort to cultivate and sustain.

Serene self-confidence is a hallmark of *You’re Weird Now*, in some ways Guerilla Toss at their Guerilla Toss-iest, keyed-up as ever but more clear-eyed, every musical choice engineered for maximum impact. When drummer Peter Negroponte half-jokingly calls the record “*Guerilla Toss’ Greatest Hits* that didn’t exist until now,” it actually feels…true? “As a band, we’re always sort of trying to reinvent ourselves,” he says. “But with this record, instead of being like, what should we try that we *haven't* done—since we’ve done a lot of crazy shit—it was like, what *have* we done that’s the strongest, and how can we work off that. Let’s reach back into our own musical history and try to make even better the things that I thought were already the best.”

The record opens with the “Krystal Ball,” a charging positivity pop anthem with an industrial breakdown and boingy-sproingy hook so sticky it seems impossible you’ve not already lost your shit to it several times at some DIY festival, yelling along with Carlson as she declares, “I’m sorry! I came to party!” Following that is “Psychosis is Just a Number,” a glittering no wave skronk anthem about staying present in the chaos - imagine post-punk Pylon meeting the cheerleaders from the “Smells Like Teen Spirit” video, but they’re obsessed with The Contortions. Highlight “Red Flag to Angry Bull” builds to a campfire sing-a-long-worthy outro featuring Malkmus and Carlson duetting over a chatty, classically Phish-y -y (there really isn’t any other way to describe it) solo from Anastasio. (The band shares that the humble Anastasio was shocked and honored when they asked him to contribute; Carlson further offers that he even seemed a bit nervous and did several takes, proof that even music icons can feel like outsiders deep into their careers.) The cacophony of voices is triumphant and cheerful, emphasizing music’s power as a mode of expression *and* connection—communication at its purest and most free-flowing.

If it’s trendy now for rock-adjacent bands to add ambient, electronic, bubblegum, jungle, and dance elements into their music, it’s worth remembering that Guerilla Toss has been doing the genreless thing from the start, and they’re still doing it on *You’re Weird Now*, an impeccably stacked “14-layer cake” of musical ideas, to quote Carlson. Take the ice-cream-for-breakfast sugar rush of “Life’s a Zoo,” a breathless song about overstimulation that itself gleefully overstimulates by cramming a million sonic hairpins into its snappy run-time, everything sewn together with a zippy chiptune hook that’ll pixelate your brain. Negroponte notes that the song has so many disparate influences that Malkmus mentioned the impossibility of pinpointing a single one. “That’s winning,” he says proudly.

Malkmus’s laid back production style allowed GT the space to trust their own instincts, a lesson that Carlson found very meaningful. “His incredibly relatable down to earth approach to music and trusting yourself as an artist had a massive effect on this album and myself as a musician,” she says. “Working with Malkmus, Bryce Goggin, Trey Anastasio, touring with Primus—all of that made me realize that what I’m doing is not wrong. The work is clear, important, and necessary. It's not always easy or clear in direction or purpose, but creating, making, performing music is vital to my life, and a healthy earth.”

“These people have been doing this forever, and they've internalized that *they are musicians* and their artistic choices are right for them and they believe in them,” she continues. “It’s really just realness and being true to yourself—whatever that means for you.”

The band hopes the message of *You’re Weird Now* will resonate not only with music heads but anyone who struggles with feeling weird in a world where it will always be hard to be different. At the end of the day, it’s all about the spirit of punk lunch: there’s room for everyone because music is for everyone. “Everyone loves and appreciates music,” says Carlson. “If you don’t like music, you’re kind of an asshole.” That’s not weird—that’s just true.