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Caravan of Thieves: The Funhouse – Music Review

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By David Conner



Imagine, if you will, riding on a carousel in a rowdy village somewhere in Eastern Europe with a group of gypsies, The Beatles and Tim Burton. All around you the most spirited music is playing; people are clapping and banging on any percussive surface they can find, dancing around fires in theatrical costumes, and plucking away on stringed instruments to lively, tarantella-like rhythms. It's either a Transylvanian festival celebrating the full moon or it's Caravan of Thieves newest album, "The Funhouse."

Or perhaps it's a bit of both. With tracks entitled "Live Forever," "Raise the Dead," "Eat You," "Haunt Me," and "Monster," you might not know where the hell you are—at which point all the band members raise their goblets and smile. Exactly. "Raise the Dead" is particularly noteworthy as a waltzy invocation complete with its own music video.

Where an actual funhouse relies on funky visuals to reshape the familiar, the album achieves a similar disarming effect by using some familiar musical elements (ballroom dances, voices, guitar, backup instruments, etc.) and combining them in an original way. The lyrics are clever, rich and mesmerizing.

I'm not going to lie: it's not going to be everyone's cup of wolfsbane tea; one man's party is another man's purgatory. But regardless of which camp you may fall into, a few bipartisan truths have to be acknowledged: "The Funhouse" defies genre, it's creative and bizarre and it seems that Caravan of Thieves had really good times recording it. That kind of reckless abandon can be more than a little infectious.

Though you won't catch me listening on a peaceful Sunday morning, for example, I feel more in touch with my inner gypsy-spirit-thing when I do. I also give props to the serious talent of lead singers Fuzz and Carrie whose voices blend flawlessly together in frequent harmonies, and to the integral voices of the violinist and bassist, Ben and Brian. It ain't easy to pull off wearing top hats while breathing new life into a cemetery with music and dance. Ah, the joys of being alive

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