

STEAMPUNK MAGAZINE

TITLE: THE FUNHOUSE

ARTIST: CARAVAN OF THIEVES

Label: United for Opportunity

Reviewed by Josh Aterovis



The funhouse, as we all remember fondly from our sepia-tinged childhoods, is a place that perfectly combines humor with horror, merriment with the macabre. That's why it's entirely fitting that Caravan of Thieves chose *The Funhouse* as the title of their third release. The album finds that balance as well, often evoking dark imagery but always keeping the tongue firmly in cheek.

The album opens with an intro, "Funhouse Entrance", a dire warning about looking too closely at the world (*it's a scream*) or waiting too long in line (*you'll die having waited your whole life*). The opening track leads perfectly into the first song, "Live Forever," a fun proclamation of the deep-seated human desire that has led many a mad-scientist to delve into the darker arts. The third track is called "I Can't Behave." It starts out as a slower number about one's inability to control themselves around that certain person. "Here comes the devil, I can't be held responsible," the husband and wife vocalists croon before launching into a jauntier tempo that implies they don't really want to behave after all.

The album's standout, and not surprisingly, the first single, "Raise the Dead" is just about perfect; a foot-stomping, hand-clapping reel about a party where the guests of honor include such long-dead luminaries as Amelia Earhart, Mozart, Joan of Arc, and Emily Dickenson. I don't know about you, but that sounds like a party I'd want to attend. Presuming, of course, you're not toasting to a bunch of flesh-rotting zombies.

Several songs are just fun trifles. "Eat You," "Candy", "I Don't Wanna", "Monster", "Mexico", and "Shim Sham" each have their charms but, for me at least, the other album standouts were "Sister Went Missing," a story-song in the vein of "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia" with a twist ending, and "Haunt Me", a beautiful ballad about love from beyond the grave.

When I got the album for review, Caravan of Thieves—a band comprised of husband and wife Fuzz and Carrie Sangiovanni, Ben Dean, and Brian Anderson—was described as Steamfolk. While their visual aesthetic is somewhat Steampunk, and their music certainly has a fun, vintage feel to it, their website describes them as gypsy folk, which I think is probably the more accurate descriptor. They have a giddy blend of resonator guitar, ukuleles, junk appliance percussion, banjo, violin, and double bass that really captures the feel of a slightly off-kilter carnival ride. *The Funhouse* is one ride you don't want to miss.

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