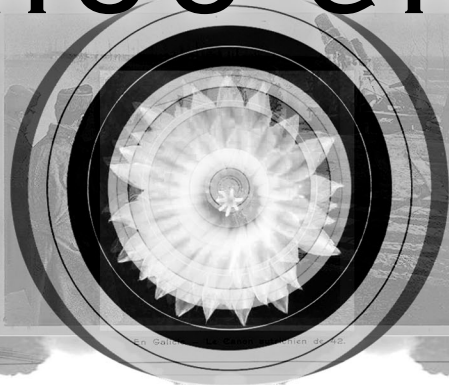


CHOO CHOO LA ROUGE



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BLACK CLOUDS



CHRIS LYNCH

JON LANGMEAD

VINCENT SCORZIELLO

ARTIST: CHOO CHOO LA ROUGE
TITLE: BLACK CLOUDS
LABEL: KIAM
CATALOG #: KRC-06
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST 18, 2009

TRACK LISTING

1. THE RELENTLESS MONEY LOVE BLUES
2. HERE COME THE GUNS
3. REGULAR GUY
4. MOSTLY AIR
5. UNDER THE ICY MOON
6. BLACK CLOUD
7. I'M A TRUCK
8. COFFEE SPOONS
9. HONEY SHOVE
10. IT'S GONNA HAPPEN FAST

RECORDED AND MIXED BY
CHOO CHOO LA ROUGE
MASTERED BY ALAN DOUCHES OF
WEST WEST SIDE MUSIC,
NEW WINDSOR, NY

ALL SONGS BY CHOO CHOO LA ROUGE
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CHOO CHOO LA ROUGE'S SECOND FULL-LENGTH,
BLACK CLOUDS, WILL BE RELEASED ON KIAM
RECORDS, WHICH IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY
SINGER/SONGWRITER JENNIFER O'CONNOR.



The world is rough, ugly and treacherous. Its deprivations are endless, its inequities are senselessly cruel. Love is a commodity, sex is an advertisement and for all but a very few, money is in terribly short supply. Choo Choo La Rouge find all of this very funny, and have set it to song.

"Black Clouds" is a supreme work of caustic humanity that belongs in the tradition of Randy Newman, Warren Zevon and The Mekons. Ten gripping, catchy songs which deconstruct the axis points between romance, power and finance with humor, passion and insight. In the upstairs/downstairs dialog that peppers the superb opener *The Relentless Money Love Blues*, a well-heeled object of affection brushes off her impoverished would be paramour with the following sentiment: "Money isn't everything, there's love. And gold." The moment perfectly encapsulates the major themes of "Black Clouds:" love matters, but self-interest matters more. The album leaves us only to ponder if it is even a close call.

The name Choo Choo La Rouge refers to a part of the subway system that runs through Cambridge, Massachusetts passing through working class enclaves and Ivy League sanctuaries. It is in the distance between these poles that the music exists: sophisticated sentiments wed to simple progressions, like Oscar Wilde embroidering upon the most unadorned blues. Choo Choo La Rouge has been together ten years and sounds like it: a great veteran band that plays together with the trusting abandon of a thousand hours logged together in public and private.

While speaking of The Replacements, an astute observer once described those great men as "the little engine that could, but didn't fucking feel like it." This honorific may well extend to include the fantastic Choo Choo La Rouge. If they wanted to make hit records they certainly could. Moments of infectious artistry on "Black Clouds" abound. The minor key verse of *Mostly Air* segues into a soaring chorus as transcendent as any rendered by REM or Wilco. It is an album packed with tremendous hooks, poignant jokes and wrenching pathos.

Not that Choo Choo La Rouge feel the need to give their achievement the hard sell. On the wonderful scene closing finale *It's Gonna Happen Fast* singer and lyricist Vincent Scorziello offers a disclaimer for each of the insightful, humane and caustic things he has broadcast for the previous nine tracks: "There's no great message/ people say all kinds of things/ you might even hear the wrong words."

Scorziello is correct, of course. The brilliant charms and resonant message of many a great band have been lost to obscurity, only to be revived after it is too late to appreciate the great work as a contemporary phenomenon. Let us hope this will not be the fate of Choo Choo La Rouge, whose brilliance is here for us to treasure right now, more so than ever, with the emergence of "Black Clouds."

- Timothy Bracy
Formerly of The Mendoza Line