

The Kills – Midnight Boom (2008)

Written by bluesever

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1. *U. R. A. Fever*
2. *Cheap and Cheerful*
3. *Tape Song*
4. *Getting Down*
5. *Last Day of Magic*
6. *Hook and Line*
7. *Black Balloon*
8. *M.E.X.I.C.O.C.U.*
9. *Sour Cherry*
10. *Alphabet Pony*
11. *What New York Used*
12. *Goodnight Bad*

The Kills are: Alison "VV" Mosshart Jamie "Hotel" Hince

When American Alison 'VV' Mosshart overheard Jamie 'Hotel' Hince thrashing his guitar in the hotel room above her a partnership was born. Leaving behind their pasts with Floridian punks, Discount, and British rock bands, Blyth Power and Scarfo, the pair started air mailing work tapes across the Atlantic. Overcome with frustration, Mosshartt upped sticks from sunny Florida to grey London and the Kills - a boy, a girl and a drum machine - were born.

Midnight Boom is the pair's third studio album. As ever, there are elements of PJ Harvey, LCD Sound System (use of the wood block and interesting percussion) but thanks to Spank Rocks' producer, Alex Epton, a more modern funky sound. Not surprisingly, for a rock girl/boy duo, the Kills have been compared to fellow garage minimalists, the White Stripes. However in this case it's the female who leads the vocals. If Brian Molko were a girl, he'd be VV. The first single to come off this, their 3rd album, U.R.A Fever, with it's heavy trip hop beats, only hints at the dirty grungy sound that is more present through. Getting Down and Cheap and Cheerful showcase

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their sparse, lo-fi, minimalist approach to songwriting as handclapping and drums are played in equal measure.

And yet, they give true noisy, dirty punk rock a run for its money with several fast and furious explosions such as M.E.X.I.C.O and Sour Cherry. The second single, Cheap And Cheerful, doesn't do justice to the album - but with lines like "I want you to be crazy cos you're boring baby when you're straight" it still hits all the right post-punk buttons. Much more melodic is the Velvet Underground-influenced Goodnight Bad Morning, all plucked acoustics and soulful vocals.

Like Detroit's Stripes they have taken an anti-careerist, anti-music industry stance leading to accusations of hypocrisy in the face of a recording deal with RCA in the States. In interviews they like to brazenly smoke. It seems they're a band who like to contradict – anti-smoking smokers, anti corporate label pushers - so it's no surprise that Midnight Boom is at once melodic AND screamingly loud. What it isn't however is anything new. That said, the band does a good job with post-Strokes, New York punk rock, and Midnight Boom will please any skinny jean, leather-jacket wearing indie rocker. ---Susie Goldring, BBC Review

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