

## “MARK OF THE PSYCHO” (CD Review)

Written by Trevor Parker

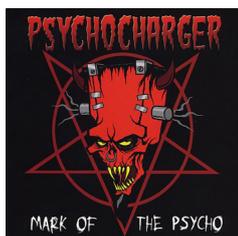
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In the very derivative world of horror rock, a band following the twangy template laid down by The Cramps deserves a little more attention than the scores of Misfits clones rolling off the conveyor belt on a daily basis. Psycho Charger is just such a group, and they go a step further by adding rumbling layers of industrial grind to the slithering bass lines and rockabilly attitude as gleaned from the Cramps' late, lamented *Lux Interior*.

Their sound will be instant comfort food to listeners who miss the mid-'90s—an era when songs featuring pulsating beats, sinister guitars and distorted vocals sounding like they're being sung through a baby monitor ruled the clubs and the charts. And with their latest release *MARK OF THE PSYCHO*, Psycho Charger stays the course set by their previous albums.



Lyrically, Psycho Charger continue to be mired in the trashy redneck milieu so beloved by Rob Zombie (the filmmaker, at least); the track “Psycho Death Machine” is a dark ode to a chemically assisted long-haul trucker and his 18-wheeled chariot, while another tune pays tribute to moonshine-brewing zombies who sport “stains in their underwear.” The music matches this lyrical tack, and a jaw harp even makes a cornpone appearance on one song. It's all dumb, inoffensive fun upon first listen, but can feel more and more juvenile on subsequent spins. On paper, the conceit behind the track “Blood!!! Shock!!! Kill!!! Rock!!!” sounds insufferably insipid, singer Jimmy Psycho simply rhyming a list of horror-movie titles over one of the band's typically swampy grooves. Surprisingly, it works. Chalk this success up to Psycho

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sounding off on such obscure cult favorites as SATAN’S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS and PUMPKINHEAD. Fango fans are guaranteed to crack a grin whenever a dusty old favorite gets name-checked throughout the song.

The album does run out of steam about midway through and starts to get repetitive, but it’s buoyed toward the end by an inspired cover of Johnny Cash’s “Wanted Man” (penned by Bob Dylan). This is the standout moment on MARK OF THE PSYCHO, as a head-knocking beat and growled verses rejuvenate a classic from the Man in Black. More like this in the future, please.

MARK OF THE PSYCHO is a solid entry that doesn’t break much new ground for the band, but won’t alienate any longtime fans either. It could trim down by about three songs without losing any momentum, but a little playlist editing solves that easily enough. And for the undecided out there, if you’ve ever sat and wondered just what Ministry would sound like playing Duane Eddy songs, Psycho Charger will have you wondering no more.



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