

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT GUAPO (compiled from Guapo's website: www.guapo.co.uk)

GUAPO/ CEBERUS SHOAL THE DUCKS AND DRAKES OF GUAPO & CERBERUS SHOAL 2003 North East Indie

"... mostly drone. really heavy and large. like 2001 soundtrack minimalist "ahhhhhh". it's monumentally huge." -5/29/03 .pataphysics-lab.com

"It is the longest, most freeform and ethereal release in the [split EP] series, and in places the most impressive and frightening. Guapo's solo piece, "Idios Kosmos," is a wall of sound dirge of guitar, cello, and electronics that swells and expands like a lung: taking in air and using it, then pausing before taking in the air again." - Rob Devlin, *The Brainwashed Brain*, V06137 09122003 brainwashed.com

GUAPO

GREAT SAGE, EQUAL OF HEAVEN

2001 Pandemonium / Tumult

"Epic and completely rocking modern prog-core ...this is completely awesome. When this is epic it reminds me of Magma, the Ruins [or their Magma-core side project...] or other heavy duty prog bands and when this gets HEAVY [and it does with a capital everything] it reminds of the Flying Luttenbachers, Melt Banana, Naked City etc but without a lot of the annoying earsplitting feedback [or really high pitched sax...of Naked City] of the former. So yeah, if you are one of the few like me who honestly like prog, or one of the post ironic mod scumbags I hate so much you can't go wrong with this one. I hope some of their other stuff comes out Stateside [Hint. Hint.] - *Sarin webzine*

"While it is true that prog was among the last bastions of dinosaur rock, the music wasn't all evil. Some of the genre's ideas even evolved, fleshing out the world of "post-rock" and discovering influences in other cultures, such as polyrhythmic drumming and Eastern European overtones. The culmination of those decades of work can be heard in the British neo/prog/jazz/noise/experimental-rock group Guapo's album *Great Sage, Equal of Heaven*. Splicing together John Zorn hard-core jazz aesthetics, cadence-style drumming, and miniMoog compositions that nearly make it cool to be "that-guy-who-doesn't-do-a-lot-on-stage," Guapo creates fast-paced, catchy tunes that are engaging and accessible. Alternating in scope between playful and brutal, the album is quality throughout." - *Old Gold and Black webzine*

"...Guapo's fourth album confounds the view that it's only from the dark altar of Black Sabbath that the devil's own riffs spring forth. ...From its opening cut, "Mountain Of The Five Elements", it's immediately apparent that the duo have been sipping from the same dark chalice that intoxicated Lark's Tongues era King Crimson. ...this is definitely not the work of neo-prog wannabes. Rather, Guapo move between reference and reappraisal with an ease that recalls the Sun City Girls' excursions into Eastern-tinged psychedelia. Prog affectations might be to the fore, but they always remain on the hither side of Prog's most gratuitous excesses. Focusing exclusively on the form, while holding back from their earlier recourse to production overload, via the use of samplers and turntables, they've somehow subverted the most noxious aspects of the music into something altogether darker." - *The Wire*

"...this London-based duo come on like all the hellhounds of Magma, Eskaton and The Ruins were hunting them down, driving them to some kind of East European world music hell where Romany saxophones and satanic moogs would forever enslave them into producing endlessly renewed, demonic didactions of the finest instrumental rock music heard in years. Phew. Enough melodrama, already. Matt Thompson and Dave Smith have written the next chapter of that high-energy, bass-and-drum heavy (not drum n' bass, this is real bass and real drums) European rock music so beloved of us Zeuhl fans. For me, this succeeds where so many pretenders falter... this is rock music first and foremost. ...they also take The Ruins' approach to metal-sourced progressive rock to new heights - their magnum opus here is the 16-minute "El Topo", which is one of those relentlessly unfolding rollercoasters of Euro-rock on a par with, say, side one of Magma's *Kohntarkosz* or *Univers Zero's Ceux de Dehors*. ...Guapo have put fire back into this genre of progressive music that really progresses - I don't mean those Floyd and Genesis soundalikes. They've also put fire back in my belly. A band to be proud of loving." - *The Sound Projector*

"These avantgardniks ... may batter your eardrums from the off, or they may build up textured layers of sound over a period of several minutes to a crescendo of paranoid intensity, but crucially there's always something rhythmic for the listener to lock on to, and the album as a whole possesses a compelling, quietly understated originality. Something a little different, and a little special. (7.5)" - *Terrorizer*

"...a very welcome palate cleanser between courses of the evil and bombast that is mostly covered in this zine." - Roberto, *Maelstrom webzine*

CONCERT REVIEWS

Kid 606, Gold Chains and Guapo live at Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff, 10/06/02

"The first step is to understand what it means to take things further. The second is to step up to the plate and do it. Like what do people consider progressive rock to be these days? Undergraduates say Radiohead, over-forties say Dream Theatre, *Buzz* points you to Guapo. This London trio play for fifty continuous minutes and force impossible angularity out of bass, drums and organ." - *Buzz magazine*

Check Engine / Zu / Guapo - London, Upstairs at the Garage 18/01/02

"Guapo are the home-town contingent, with their line-up recently expanded to include a keyboard player and subsequently sounding the best they've ever been. Still it's the freeform bass drone and extended drum solo headed straight for oblivion, but now with added orchestral melody to soften the blow. They've taken a step back, spread their wings a bit, but, of course, continue to take great delight in inflicting it all upon us. It's like the soundtrack to a Japanese snuff movie, and all strangely hypnotic, the keyboards spiralling out of sight, only to break to a wall of pure white light, while the rhythm section rumbles obliviously on. Then it builds inexorably from nowhere, a howling drone rising to meet the seemingly random percussion with tentacles reaching out to envelop everybody and everything. Rarely can one man have had such a galvanising effect on a band; with Guapo, strength has been found in increased numbers." - *Skippy's Cage webzine*

Guapo live at The Verge, London, 14/3/01

"Forget the Ruins comparisons you might have heard... what we get instead is a sound that roughly approximates Ayers Rock on wheels, grinding block bass chords arguing with deceptively graceful but restless drums. This is a very, very heavy experience, the melodies evoke the wordless incantations of the best Magma songs, Matt Thompson the surly bass player scoops up his bass into the sound of a million sirens with one pedal, whilst grabbing that sound and looping it with another pedal, then the bastard dives back down into the depths and rips our collective guts apart with acres of boiling, thrash distorto-bass action - the man is evil. Hell, the whole sound is evil; they've come very far from early Zorn/Ruins origins, skilfully avoiding jazz wankery and free form tedium along the way. Whilst it's difficult to pinpoint what makes the whole thing work, or even what makes the whole thing enjoyable, it's easy to get lost in the sound and let yourself get pummelled as massive fuck-off riff after massive fuck-off riff builds into one glorious shitstorm. Not for the faint hearted..." - *Skippy's Cage webzine*

GUAPO**DEATH SEED****2000 Free Land**

“British free-noise duo Guapo teamed up... The six Guapo and Ruins tracks sound like four giant iron wasps fighting in an aluminium bucket, Ruins' imperious progressive-rock leanings being delightfully undermined by Guapo's dirtier guitar slashes, while the three collaborations with Shock Exchange are in the more traditional "squeaky door" mode of British free improvisation.” – *Sunday Times*

“With the Ruins along for the ride in this session, the trio of Matt Thompson, Caroline Kraabel and Dave Smith (a.k.a. Guapo) design, build, tear-down, and re-build guitar rock. With jazz on the blueprints, the bass guitars, six-string guitars, samplers, saxophone and drums come together on the job site to out-do the jackhammers, front-loaders, and cement-mixers that audiences think are hidden inside Guapo's amplifiers. Improvisation is the greatest gift architects and contractors of jazz and noise/core could ever offer the public.”– *Silvergirl webzine*

GUAPO**HIROHITO****1998 Pandemonium**

“Tooled up with samplers, avant-metallists Guapo take basic, grinding riffs as their foundation, then throw in a whole range of contrasting elements, among them orchestral passages, Oriental dialogue and Caroline Kraabel's saxophone. These elements are compounded into a monumental collage of source sounds and muscular music.” – *The Wire*

“Londoners Guapo come disguised in the sonic and visual signatures of the Japanese underground... But Guapo broaden their palette with a plunderphonic penchant for recontextualising snatches of national anthems and sampling spooky schoolgirl voices, creating a distinctive hybrid of eastern art noise and western cut-and-paste collage.” – *Sunday Times*

“London-based fellow Magma fans Guapo expand their hardcore noise sound with a cut and paste aesthetic. ...Progtastic!”– *Resonance FM*

GUAPO**TOWERS OPEN FIRE****1997 Power Tool**

“Just when you were starting to get bored with anti-social behaviour and the music it tends to produce, along comes a bunch of teabags to pummel your senses hard enough to qualify you for a free ambulance ride. "Towers Open Fire" is filled with accelerated rhythms, start-stop math-rock structures and the sound of guitars being used as assault weapons. A sampler also makes it's presence known on some of the tracks, but it's used judiciously as an element to shore up an already bad attitude... There's enough brain splattering going down on these dozen tracks that you'll wonder what other slimy psychotics are gnawing away under the bloated carcass of England's music scene.” – *Alternative Press*

“At the extreme end of the beats and blips genre now dubbed "electronica" are twisted noise-manglers who are more likely to sample Ukranian noseflutes than utilise basic dancefloor beats. London based trio Guapo distort and deviate on "Towers Open Fire", none of their "tunes" following the predictable routes.” – *Kerrang!*

“If you are looking for musical catharsis, Guapo just may be the group for you. Combining post-punk energy and snarl, and the category of music known as Zeuhl, Guapo plays with a vengeance. ...Guapo's take on Zeuhl is... with a powerful flair for squalling guitars and pounding drums. ... Guapo's sound, perhaps a combination of early Swans and Ruins, is nothing if not devastating.” – *Option*

REVIEWS OF SINGLES**Guapo vs Magma**

“Disturbing industrial mayhem from a London bunch who are enjoying a certain infamy on the underground European scene. The material here spans ear-crippling full-metal racketeering to freely improvised progressive noise-mongering. Their live gigs feature "angle grinders, blood-soaked drumkits and distressed electronics", it says here. Lovely.” – *Record Collector*

“One of the most irreverent of London's experimental noise outfits responding to the whirling jazz barbarisms of one of the most serious of '70s progressive bands? Guapo's typically mangled Magma tribute is "versus" in the terms of aggressive remixers - Magma only appear as maltreated vinyl records or in looming spirit, depending on how Guapo's whims take form. ... Guapo hit the turntables for "Zeuhl 2", scratching, speeding up and cutting up Magma records into a messy refraction of scratches, wavering choirs and surface noise, as if the music's arrived on grim and ghostly wind. Skidding cars and smashing glass herald the arrival of "Uranium", a growling Ruins-style bassquake with a muzzy dispassionate chant of "radiation". Here, in particular, Guapo capture some of Magma's science-fiction brutality and their atmospheric, apocalyptic sagas. "... All of this is a love letter of sorts, I suppose; a few old treasures taken by force, reworked into ferociously surreal ornaments, ending as violent gifts thrust back into bewildered palms. Hope Magma are pleased; but then, who'd toy with the affections of a deconstructor?” – *Misfit City webzine*

Horse Walks Into A Bar

“True story...horse walks into a bar asks for a drink barman says what's with the long face...” I don't really know why I like Guapo. Maybe it was because of the joke. Or the singer's Big Black "He's a Whore" Cheap Trick tribute T-shirt. Or maybe it's because they make deliciously controlled pieces of metallic mayhem like this over and over again. I don't know why. I don't care.” – *Melody Maker*