

Guru Guru – UFO « Freq



Oozing an off-kilter chemistry, [Guru Guru](#) were full of escape plans and wormholing excess filled with a real “let’s see what these toys can do” verve. The first three tracks of their début album *UFO* (re-released at last on both black and turquoise vinyl by [Play Loud!](#)) hold court to a certain rock *joie de vivre*, a freeform adventure that surges at you both explosive and mesmerizing, its gritty lo-fi-ness devoid of that modern hi-def, Blu-rayed smoothness that totally misses the point.

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The slick pulsating beast that is “Stone In” starts proceedings in a magnetic dance of guitar and percussive between, a zesty cursiveness that heightens the game. The steady murmur of bass widening on some lovely wah-indulgent castles, the walls on which vocals wither incoherently like wind-blasted weeds. Everything flying off in refreshed directions, the bass attempting a purring hold on the guitar’s leash, a futility that snaps on a fiery glow of riffery.

“Girl Call”’s bronchial buzz of pylon(ed) energy stokes the furnace further after the whirring feathers of its introduction, convulsive chords forced into a jar of trapped butterflies like an immensity of discordant shimmers that melt into a spiral of new progressions. It lunges from calm to chaotic freeform, swelling like a January tide slapping a harbour wall in locked-in repeats, scooped up in the tense tightening of expression then zapped to buggery. A mantle that suckles the fresh tempo drive of “Next Time See You At The Dalai Lhama” its possible futures, marauding my head like [Die Haut](#) and [Cave](#)’s “Truck Love.” A vibe way, way ahead of the curve, especially for 1970 when the majority were still threading daisies together in hippy bliss. Swallowing an incessant [Pere Ubu](#) post-punk interlock that blows up dust behind itself, mysteriously disgorged into what sounds like a horse-drawn cart approaching a Himalayan village.

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A nifty slip of scenery the album’s title track exploits more vividly in a heavy dose of alien abstraction. Not the obvious interplanetary whirring you’d expect — you know, like that rather odd TV series of the same name — but one where its points of reference are cleverly erased, blurred; vibes that seem more the remit of today’s sonic bamboozling than ones from the dawn of the Seventies. It’s a terrific jumble of fricative debris, percussive and blunt like a guitar being grazed by an electric fan, nice details miraging out too; screams that bounce a tiled sanatorium, scary lunges of instability. Lurid blushes of transmission burring those recurring recharge pangs, a jagged knifing of angles and misfiring accelerations, as if it was a spaceship being piloted by a extraterrestrial learner driver throwing out odd rotor scuffed kinetics in a botched attempted to take off, a *zzzzazta* frost of propulsion caught in a

cymbal's sibilance. A broken borealis of quantum rainbows that finally rips from this dimension into some other, its wake held in the creaking curve of a boat's oar; a transaction that is both bewilderingly beautiful and brilliantly unexpected.

"Der LSD-Marsch" is a slight return to rockier vibes as glinting frets afix to a choir-like oscil-drone. A strange syrup of wah-bent convictions and tapering chords under-bellied in a gloomy bass to which further gossamer threads weave out. It's a rich tapestry snaked in gloriously delayed clarinet highlights, looped revolvers riddled in wandering tendrils, honeycombs of dazzling dexterity that wield a curious magnetism on your consciousness. As first excursions go, this Guru Guru LP certainly feels 46 years young.

-Michael Rodham-Heaps-

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