

Skazi - Total Anarchy (Chemical Crew)

Contributed by damion psyreviews

The big guns are bloody well blazing here

My guess is that before you even decided to read this review, you already made your mind up about this guy. Skazi is single-handedly the biggest star that this scene has yet produced. He's massive on YouTube, he fronted a Pepsi campaign in Israel, he has his own comedy tribute act Skuzi, he threatened psyreviews, and it's only a matter of time before your mum knows who he is. Your little sister probably does already. We've never seen this ubiquitous growth of a brand & it's like Pokemon.

Let's get one thing clear: Skazi has nothing to do with psychedelic trance; not does he present himself to be. He is a showman: a crowd-pleaser. This idea of the egocentric-entertainer-attention-whore intrigues me. I thought he might be the psy equivalent of Robbie Williams, until I realised that most girls find Robbie desperately attractive and even us blokes & for a greater or lesser part & consider Robbie an affable, beers-down-the-pub sort of bloke. Then I thought he might be more like Bobcat from the Police Academy movies; the one who couldn't talk properly but for whom everyone had some sort of misguided softspot.

Musically, Total Anarchy is incredibly simple; but you knew that already. The heady, parent-disturbing mix of guitars, doofdoof, and half-baked synths sounds like Rage Against The Machine remixed by Altern-8 (except in a bad way). All the tracks have a punky, psy-emo intro that eventually & quite embarrassingly & escalates into a bunfight of frequencies, like someone using a pneumatic drill on a pile of cats while Celine Dion sings through a battered sound system in teh background.

The album's opening is cause for concern in itself: the cod-orchestral swirls that sound like the Requiem For A Dream theme layered over Barber's Adagio for Strings. Now who the hell else would even try such a thing? Even Spinal Tap would have thought twice; but perhaps that's the point.

Anarchy, Skazi's ill-conceived rip of Europe's The Final Countdown, is dreadful. But as those YouTube videos will show, it sends people ballistic & especially when they are confronted with the sweaty, hairy outline of Asher up on stage in front of them. Likewise Others, the painful rehash of The Prodigy's Out Of Space. Both of these are so dreadful, it is my duty to inform you of the relevant original artists' record companies & here and here & in order to report this unauthorised use of their copyright material. (Max Romeo's original vocal, sampled by The Prodigy, is owned by Island Records so you may like to CC them as well.)

Of course, there is the rapping. It's a toss up, but either Move Away or Hit & Run is the worst of the bunch. But whichever, it is a Scientifically Proven Fact of Music that this rapping is the worst committed to any audio medium since Blondie's Rapture. Lyrics in general aren't the strong point on this album: Michelle Adamson, apparently recorded down a well, sounds as though she is about to die.

Move Away is the masterpiece here. Not masterpiece in terms of good; but in terms of shit. It is the singular most Skazi track that Skazi has ever done. And if that sentence doesn't put the fear of God into you, then it bloody well should.

Much like Dali's recent album, the issue is not whether this is good music. Like I said at the start, you already know what the deal is with Skazi and you've already decided whether or not you're going to buy it. The key thing here that should be interesting to us is quite what is going on culturally. In the humble mumble of this reviewer, the real issue is what he has become and where he is going.

Total Anarchy is ballsy, upfront, confident and swaggering. It will enjoy massive success and & like Skazi himself & deserves that success. Skazi is not a man, not a duo, not a live act, and not a sound. Skazi is a product, an entertainer. Anyone could make the music, but not anyone could put it out into the world the way he does.

An individual with such mass appeal and crossover potential, you're not sure whether to expect to see him headlining next year's trance festival, or as the baddie in the next Bond film. And you can't say that about anyone else in this scene. 7 for the act, not for the album