



Someone—I think it was that dead asshole, John Lennon—once said that you never really outgrow the music of your youth. If so, I'm musically arrested in the early seventies, and you can blow me if you don't like it.

Sonically retarded by age twelve, my ears concluded that glam rock is the only legitimate musical format ever to brush against this divine dingleberry we call Earth. Now, people usually act like I've just kicked them in the stomach when I say that glam was rock's finest

moment in the sun. I usually *have* kicked them in the stomach, but I digress.

It stains my shorts that glam's considerable influence on *nuevo wavo* is ignored. The so-called "underground" saps will embrace the Stooges, MC5, and Dolls—all huggable combos, mind you—but scoff at Slade, The Sweet, and Alice Cooper. Why do they do it? Well, if you feed them enough heroin, they'll admit that it's because the first three groups had bad production, bad songs, and didn't sell any records. They like those sort of *faux* dirtbag values—it helps them forget that they're living off their parents' trust funds. If Uncle Alice hadn't moved units by the truckload, you can bet your tattooed anus that the "undies" would venerate "I'm Eighteen" as shamelessly as they do "No Fun." Joey Ramone, for one, always pointed to Alice as an influence, and Little Johnny Rotten reportedly auditioned for the Pistols by lip-synching to a Cooper ditty. How come you didn't know that? Because you're a jerkoff!

I'm aware that glam rock in 1993 is about as relevant as punk rock—in other words, not relevant at all. Glam's detractors emit self-satisfied guffaws at its sequined outfits, platform shoes, and foo-foo hair. But to say that glam was all about fashion is like saying that punk was all about safety pins.

Sure, pineapple hairdos are silly, but nipple piercings aren't? Don't knock platform shoes, either—few things are better for stamping a crescent moon in someone's forehead. What's overlooked is that glam bands had a fat-assed guitar sound, certainly chubbier than most of the post-nasal drip which passes for raw power these days. Glammish guitars unleashed a sound as thick as the poop you take after Thanksgiving

dinner. Glam merrily melded metal and melody over percussive handclaps as furious as a snort of amyl nitrite. But it's a forgotten form of music, scorned by both "classic" rockers and the dreaded alternative ghetto. Like me, it fell in between the cracks.

Of course, dressing like a broad and wearing a snake around your neck isn't exactly going to bring the walls of oppression a-tumblin' down, but neither is flinging doo-doo at the audience nor caterwauling about vivisection. Alice Cooper in his heyday was as unsettling to mainstream tastes as punk ever was. "You *like* him?" my incredulous plumber father asked me over beef and potatoes. "Why, he doesn't even admit that he's a *man!*"

Sure, I liked Cooper's epic white-trash bum-outs. I also liked The Sweet's vacuum-sealed perfecto-pop and Gary Glitter's Freddie-Mercury-as-a-pro-wrestler gesticulations. But nothing left as strong a mark on my mushy man-child's brain as the night I tuned into *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* and saw Slade. With his three-piece plaid suit, nosebleed-inducing platforms, mirrored top hat, muttonchop sideburns, and frog's eyes, singer Noddy Holder resembled a foul hybrid of a barnyard goat and Larry Fine from the Three Stooges. Even odder were guitarist Dave Hill's inscrutable bald-man bangs. He looked like the skeleton character from the Milton the Monster cartoon and for my money is the weirdest visual creature of the rock era. Slade were incurably ugly and never would have made it on MTV. *Jim Redden* is better-looking than Slade, for Christ's sake.

To this day, I defend Slade with the same ferocity a mama wolverine uses to protect her suckling pups. Allegedly one of the loudest live bands ever, Slade specialized in anthems: boot-stomping, fist-pumping, crypto-fascist anthems. They sounded like AC/DC using fish-'n'-chips grease to plow Eddie Cochran's

bunghole. The fire-alarm guitars on "Them Kinda Monkeys Can't Swing" went for your throat like the Sex Pistols on steroids, only it was 1974. On such songs as "Don't Blame Me," Noddy had a hellish yawp that could loosen your molars. No one has ever matched that scream—not Little Richard, Alan Vega, nor the wrinkled Igster. For sheer amplitude, Slade

unmask your average hardcore ensemble for the carrot-nibbling eunuchs they really are.

It's criminal that America's collective memory retains Led Zep, while Slade are washed away like genital crabs in a tub of bleach. Slade are about the only thing on which I agree with the British: Holder & Co. had an insane string of number-one hits in the land of bad teeth and crappy meat pies. But for all the limey adulation, they never had a bona fide stateside smash. The unkindest cut of all came in the early eighties, when doofus follicle-rockers Quiet Riot went to the top of the U.S. charts with a flatulent redo of "Cum on Feel the Noize."

In their prime, Slade fulfilled the two requirements for musical excellence: 1) decibels 2) stupidity. They refused to quit rocking BECAUSE NO ONE TOLD THEM TO STOP. Like most glam bands, they were beholden to the innocent and ultimately dopey belief that rock 'n' roll *means*

something. Subtly simply wasn't part of their repertoire. They practiced crude tunesmanship, not postmodernist birdshit. You don't ask a street whore to do calculus, so you shouldn't seek profundity in a rock 'n' roll band. Yet the undies have an annoying tendency to worship a group such as The Ramones, who are somewhat *conscious* of being stupid, while discounting Slade, who truly didn't have a clue. Mainline *these* lyrics, Joey and Johnny: "Have an athlete on your feet/Have a love smell on your sheet/Eat an apple every day/The doc-tah has got-tah keep away." (from "Thanks for the Memories.") It plain don't *get* no dumber than that.



I grew up in Philadelphia, a city not known for spawning genius. On the cover of *Slayed?*, my idols looked shaggy, uncouth, and quite a bit dim, just like me and my friends. Slade were my ship's captains as I embarked on a voyage through body odor, pubic hair, and wet dreams. They imprinted themselves on me emotionally at a time when the twelve-year-old Philly girls—and there's nothing more fishily slutty than a Philly girl—were having their braces removed and sprouting nubby titlets. This was when I sniffed pussy for the first time, when the neighborhood ho let me and a partner-in-delinquency bang her in some woods near our tract houses. It was a sweet age, when I indulged masturbatory fantasies about Linda Blair and once ran away from home for refusing to shear my laughable Prince Valiant locks. What else was I going to do? I was getting smacked around by the nuns in class and belt-whipped by my folks at home, who threatened to haul me off to military school.

So I crawled under the bed sheets with a clunky AM radio and listened closely as Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll (Part 2)" wobbled sluggishly from the speaker. That song still has the most mammoth guitar sound ever, like a field of yawning brontosaurus. It whisked me away from my parents for three minutes. That's the only time I asked anything of music, the only time I ever

needed it. Because as anyone sensible knows, people who take music seriously after age twelve suffer from severe character defects.

**Musical genius?
Voice of a generation?
Or dead blond asshole?**

**The world will miss him
The world will mourn Kurt Cobain
The world is stupid**

**He played his guitar
Sang of alienation
Wish I'd shot him first**

**A sensitive guy
Wore dresses, asked to be raped
Worms crawl in his ass**

**How many Cobains
Must die to end the madness?
At least two more, right?**

**Courtney's such a bitch
She won't share her heroin
Junkie brains go SPLAT!**

**Grunge king hates his life
Frances Bean's dad goes bye-bye
12-gauge in the mouth**

**Call this nirvana?
Psycho wife, screaming daughter
Give me hell instead**

**I'm always depressed
I play depressing music
Guess I'll kill myself**

**Smells like teen spirit?
No, smells like a dead body
Entertain us NOW**

**Boo-hoo, Kurt is dead
Let's hope Gen X follows suit
Or at least Miss Love**

**Dead junkie rock star
Mistaken as a poet
By youthful retards**

**"I'm not gonna crack"
Sang Cobain in "Lithium"
Guess what? Cobain cracked**

**Nirvana broke up
Kurt's bass player and drummer
Work at McDonald's**

**Been dead for a year
Don't miss Seattle at all
Stomach feels better**

**cobain
haiku**

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING

SLADE

