



Steve Taylor & the Danielson Foil – Wow to the Deadness EP

Side A

1. Wow to the Deadness (2:35)
2. Wait Up Downstep (2:29)
3. The Dust Patrol (2:01)

Side B

1. Nonchalant (3:02)
2. A Muse (2:17)
3. Drats (2:54)

When people ask **Steve Albini** what he's been listening to, he rarely names an album he's recorded. But when he sat down with *Buddyhead* for the fifth installment of *Buddyhead Radio* in July, he made an exception. "**Dan Smith** just put together this ad hoc band with a singer named **Steve Taylor**," he said. "And they play this really rowdy punk rock. And that record is fucked-up and great. I didn't expect that kind of music out of them, and I certainly didn't expect it to be as awesome as it was. I was expecting it to be charming or interesting. It ended up being really raucous and really great."

"Really raucous and really great" is the perfect shorthand for **Steve Taylor & the Danielson Foil's** *Wow to the Deadness*, a whipcrack 6-song EP recorded by Albini that applies scalding punk rage to delightfully cockeyed song structures, making for a half-dozen tracks without many clear musical parallels. It's Magazine covering the *Godspell* soundtrack or the Buzzcocks trading verses with the Free Design.

The collaboration grew out of a U.S. tour Taylor and his band, the Perfect Foil (Jimmy Abegg, Peter Furler and John Mark Painter), took with Danielson in support of Taylor's acclaimed 2014 album *Goliath*. Though both Taylor and Smith had spent most of their careers questioning norms -- Taylor through sharp social satire, Smith through dizzyingly inventive songwriting -- a musical alliance between the two of them wasn't exactly a foregone conclusion. But they had such immediate, easy chemistry that they reached out to Albini, with whom both Taylor and Smith had worked before, to set aside studio time when the tour swung through Chicago. The result is the *Wow to the Deadness* EP that combines both of their sensibilities for a batch of songs full of hairpin musical left turns and sharp, deftly-observed lyrics.

Opener "Wow to the Deadness" is the perfect example of their effortless fusion. Part eerie campfire sing-along, part bruised-up brawler, the song volleys from Taylor's exhortation to "let it slide to the other side" to Smith's ecstatic declaration, "We have a winner!" In "A Muse," Taylor plays another gloryhound clawing for his 15 minutes over acrid, grinding guitars. And "Wait Up Downstep" is a revved-up Boy Scout marching song, Smith alternating between a punchy, mantra-like refrain and beautifully swooping verses. And "Nonchalant" has the same coiled intensity as the National, but feels more wounded, more restless. More

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than anything, **Steve Taylor & the Danielson Foil** is the sound of two acts scrapping every rule of songwriting and following their own impulses. Every time you think you've got its sound pinned down, it shape-shifts again, transforming into something entirely new -- fantastically confounding, and utterly irresistible. Like Albini said: it's really raucous and really, really great.

Previous Press

"One sign that you've gotten your grubby little hands on a truly great new album is the repeating occurrence of finding a brand new favorite song just about every time you listen to a project. Steve Taylor & The Perfect Foil's *Goliath* is just such a creatively renewable artistic energy."

– Dan MacIntosh, *AXS*

"Everything here is wound tight and ready to pounce...Most of the songs build to moments of bug-eyed, bleeding-throat punk fury...["Only A Ride" is] like "The Entertainment" from *Infinite Jest* as filtered through a Richard Hell song. Throughout *Goliath*, Taylor makes his points through implication rather than explication, dropping hints and reveling in some of the knottiest, cleverest wordplay of his career. Lyrically, the album mostly favors the art-film, up-for-interpretation approach Taylor employed with Chagall Guevara, stringing clever phrases together like popcorn on a Christmas tree and letting the listener do the untangling." – J. Edward Keyes, *Wondering Sound*

"'Moonshot,' from their LP *Goliath*, is a sprightly pop-funk tune with real sonic ambitions—think Beck's *Midnite Vultures* filtered through David Bowie's *Low*." – Miles Raymer, *Entertainment Weekly*

"How do you sum up the essence of a band? Do you rave about their instrumental skills and quality vocals, or emphasize their clever lyrics? Do you brag about their killer live show? I could do any or all of these things in talking about the sheer genius that is Steve Taylor & the Perfect Foil. They really are the 'full meal deal.'" – Susie Finney, *Bedlam Magazine*

"The [collaborative] results are seamlessly suited to Fair's tirades. The melodies, upbeat and driving, by turns lilting and rocking, are manifestos of positivity, jolts of life in the face of some unnamable enemy. Fair throws around words like "sunshine", "good" or "love" as though they're absolutes, yet with a delivery and context that imbues them with a complexity that the concepts deserve." – *The Wire* on Jad Fair & Danielson's *Solid Gold Heart*

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POINTS OF INTEREST

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