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THE GOLDEN RAT *(feat. Tokyo rock royalty Mr Ratboy and Hiroshi the Golden Arm) release debut album 'We Got A Right'!*

*'a 15-song triumph – the soundtrack of
their teenage years'*

1. **Ain't That A Shame (Brian James 1979)**
2. **It's Not Enough (Heartbreakers 1977)**
3. **Russian Roulette (The Lords of The New Church 1982)**
4. **Rock and Roll Heart (Lou Reed 1976)**
5. **No More Heroes (The Stranglers 1977)**
6. **Dancing Barefoot (Patti Smith Group 1979)**
7. **Ain't Proud (The Little Roosters 1981)**
8. **Ain't Nobody White (Mitch Ryder 1980)**
9. **Some Girls (The Rolling Stones 1978)**
10. **Shot By Both Sides (Magazine 1978)**
11. **Don't Come Close (Ramones 1978)**
12. **She Cracked (The Modern Lovers 1976)**
13. **A Minor Aversion (The Saints 1978)**
14. **Love Kills (Radio Birdman 1977)**
15. **The Whole Of The Law (The Only Ones 1978)**

Tokyo duo **The Golden Rat** (featuring Mr Ratboy and Hiroshi the Golden Arm) are set to release a dazzling collection of songs - interpretations of tracks which inspired both musicians throughout their adolescence. This is real rock n roll which left a lasting impact and together, they've dug deep into those influences to deliver an album that some are already labelling a masterpiece. What originally started as a way to deal with the covid lockdown of 2020, quickly morphed into something more and these two seasoned musicians soon realised that the demos they were recording, were in fact, from-the-heart renditions of songs that came from deep within – and has resulted in their ultimate rock n roll memoir – **'We Got A Right'**. Both cats have extensive musical histories...here's a summary:

HIROSHI THE GOLDEN ARM: Known as the ‘Japanese Johnny Thunders’ he honed his slashing-guitar style in the 1980’s before forming Tokyo trash kings The Remains. Their first two early 90’s singles ‘Lost My Heart’ and ‘The Angel Rise From The Grave’ had an immediate impact on the Tokyo punk scene and are now considered cult classics. Split 7”s with Freddy Lynxx then Jeff Dahl followed before the band changed their name to The Golden Arms and issued their pièce de resistance...1998’s ‘Gimme Some Lips’. Hiroshi and Mr Ratboy later formed the ground-breaking electro/ trash outfit Ace Killers Union and cut the 2017 album ‘Trash Town Rock’. The musical chemistry these two generate is something special – so joining forces and joining names seemed obvious. Already a popular live draw, the release of this new album will ensure their fan-base continues to grow and strong turnouts at Japan’s raucous live-houses will continue.

MR RATBOY: In a career touching four decades, the multi-talented Mr Ratboy has plugged in and played with some of rock n roll’s elite: Sour Jazz, Motorcycle Boy, Pillbox, Bebe Buell, Jeff Dahl, Marky Ramone & The Intruders, Kevin K, Freddy Lynxx, The Golden Arms, Ace Killers Union, Les Has-Beens, Stellan Wahlström Drift Band and the Neurotic Spiders to name a few! His unique and on-point guitar sound, stage presence and reliability to deliver the goods is why so many have called upon his talents. In 1997, this in-demand guitar slinger released the critically acclaimed solo album ‘A Gift From Mr Ratboy’. The real rock n roll deal.



Photo: Matthias Frey

“From a soulfully sung ‘Dancing Barefoot’ to a snarky ‘Some Girls’, their exemplary version of Bowie’s ‘Pinups’ is certain to become a closely guarded favorite of real rock’n’roll aficionados from here to Elvis Presley Boulevard. In the words of Lux Interior, ‘they got good taste.’ (Dimitri Monroe)

So how did a well-credentialed European guitar-slinger end up partnering one of Tokyo's underground guitar gods?

Hiroshi:

I first met Mr. Ratboy in 1993. It was when the Jeff Dahl Band arrived in Tokyo (Jeff's second tour of Japan). Ratboy was the lead guitarist in Jeff's band. My band The Remains opened the show. Mr. Ratboy later played with us - as The Golden Arms - during a series of sweaty, well-attended gigs called Night Of The Living Dolls. From memory we played 'It's Not Enough' which sounded incredible. In the beginning, we were both inspired by the same songs and artists, so it was a natural fit for us to be in a band together. We still keep close to our roots so we can always go back to basics - and our rock n roll will continue!

Mr Ratboy:

In 1993, when I came to play in Japan with Jeff Dahl, Hiroshi was the first person I met. He came to the airport to bring me back to Tokyo and we hit it off right away. We were about the same age, grew up listening to the same stuff and shared the same enthusiasm for rock 'n' roll. Hiroshi was also in the opening band, and it was obvious that he 'had it' and was serious about taking this as far as he could.

Fast forward a decade or so - and after moving to Japan in 2000, I naturally reconnected with him and once in a while appeared as a guest (live & studio) with his band The Golden Arms. In 2016, it got a little more serious when Hiroshi invited me to play guitar on his project Ace Killers Union. This resulted in the 2017 album 'Trash Town Rock'. I had started getting the itch to play out occasionally, but since AKU was more of a studio project, I asked Hiroshi if he would be interested in doing acoustic shows around town, playing covers that we both dug (and songs that the audience might be able to relate to). We started loosely rehearsing once a week and soon we had a good amount of material to choose from. One of the concepts I had from the start was to get both of us out of our comfort zone and do something different. I'm an electric guitarist, so I was going to be the singer and play only acoustic guitar. Hiroshi being a singer/guitarist, he was going to be the only electric guitarist and not sing much. The exact opposite of AKU. This way it was different from the start, not our regular standard format. Any song we liked was fair game as long as I could somewhat sing it and two guys with guitars could do it justice! We started with some obvious standards - Stooges/Alice Cooper/Thunders stuff, but we soon favored more obscure songs, singles, forgotten tracks from a forgotten album etc. There are so many forgotten songs that fell through the cracks, and we wanted to dig some of 'em back up! The goal was never to improve on the material, all these songs are perfect as they were originally recorded, it was more a fun challenge for us to try to make them sound decent in the context of The Golden Rat - and hopefully enlightening some of our listeners about this material during our intimate gigs. It worked great, people really dug the shows, and our repertoire was obscure and varied enough to keep it interesting.

The origins of 'We Got A Right' hark back five years to some demos which were cut – explains Mr Ratboy:

The Golden Rat was never meant to release a full album. I recorded a few demos in 2017-18 but that was mostly for fun. These were 'Ain't Nobody White', 'Don't Come Close' and 'Love Kills'. When the pandemic hit, we couldn't play anymore. At the beginning we kept our weekly rehearsal going, but all the shows were being cancelled and soon we were not rehearsing anymore. The year before, I had bought a new digital home studio recorder that I'd never really had a chance to use, so instead of doing nothing, in the Summer of 2021 I decided to start recording some of our material. The original goal was to simply document what we had been playing for the last few years before I would forget it all. I really got into recording and soon the 'two-guys-with-guitars' concept was expanding. It always started with a couple of acoustic guitars, then I listened back and started filling the gaps with what I thought was missing. During this process, instead of rehearsing, we discussed the songs and Hiroshi would be recording his parts. This went on for more than half a year and

towards the end I invited a sax player friend of mine (Daigenta Okajima) who added his wonderful baritone saxophone on 5 songs in a single session lasting just a few hours. I sang him the parts.

Some additional concepts were applied to these Golden Rat recordings:

- The overall sound must remain organic and 'real', it must be recorded with a sense of urgency and mistakes that are not catastrophic must be kept. "It's close enough for rock 'n' roll" like they say.
- Everything is played by hand (or foot!) no midi, no synching anything with anything else. The only exception to this is the drum machine on 'Russian Roulette', I needed that calypso feel and couldn't play it myself.
- The songs should all originate from the same period, from the mid/late 70's to the early 80's, that is when both Hiroshi and I were still teenagers sucking this stuff up like rock 'n' roll sponges.

This meant that some of our regular repertoire had to be put aside ('Be My Lover', 'Try To Understand', 'Mister You're A Better Man Than I', 'Gimme Danger') but it made space for some new songs we had never played live and that were developed in the garage we used as a studio. Those were 'Shot By Both Sides', 'Minor Aversion' and 'She Cracked'.

Why were these 15 songs chosen? Mr. Ratboy explains:

The aim of The Golden Rat was never to improve on the songs we picked for 'We Got a Right', these 15 songs were perfect the first time around and it would be foolish to pretend otherwise. The basic idea was to pick material that had a big impact on both of us when it came out during our teenage years in the late 70s-early 80s. Some were hugely popular, some not at all, but all of them made such a long-lasting impression on us that we wanted to give them another spin, just for fun.

1. **Ain't That a Shame.** This long-forgotten Brian James single has been stuck in my brain for over 40 years. This bittersweet song released in 1979 had it all, great guitar hooks, super catchy melody, clever words and even Stewart Copeland on drums.
2. **It's Not Enough.** The Heartbreakers LAMF is remembered for anthems like 'Chinese Rocks' and 'Born to Lose' and for inspiring the punk rock movement around the globe. The only ballad on an otherwise rowdy album, it still sounds badass and points at the direction Johnny Thunders would take a few years later in his solo career. The original features a heartfelt guitar solo by the hugely underrated Walter Lure.
3. **Russian Roulette.** Brian James again! In 1982 the first Lords of the New Church album restored faith in Rock & Roll for the believers who had used up their copies of 'Too Much, Too Soon' and 'Raw Power'. Stiv Bators and Brian had come up with a band that could launch the heritage of the previous generation into the future and this song did just that.
4. **Rock & Roll Heart.** There are so many essential Lou Reed songs, it's truly hard to choose. This one is so infectious and compelling that it speaks directly to me. When you have a Rock & Roll heart, you know it. I miss Lou Reed.
5. **No More Heroes.** The Stranglers are unique in every possible way. They were lumped in the punk bandwagon because they didn't fit anywhere else, but with their superior songs and musicianship, they really are in a league of their own. This song lamented the lack of heroes in 1977, I do it today.
6. **Dancing Barefoot.** A distinctive song from a distinctive artist who still produces relevant music to this day. Ivan Kral was fantastic on guitar, and he never got the recognition he deserved.
7. **Ain't Proud.** This one is from the Joe Strummer-produced Little Roosters album that came out only in France in 1981. Fronted by the dynamic Garrie J. Lammin, they were a punky version of The Faces or The Stones. Way ahead of their time, go hunt down this gem of an album.
8. **Ain't Nobody White.** I first discovered Mitch Ryder through 'Naked But Not Dead', his second album after his 1978 comeback. I didn't know his 60's output but was floored by his then current material.

His band was phenomenal, his singing was honest and powerful, and his songs touched on pertinent subjects, like this one. Cultural appropriation is a hot topic these days.

9. **Some Girls.** My favorite Rolling Stones albums are from the mid-70s. Brilliant idea, I feel bad for Sir Michael Philip Jagger.
10. **Shot By Both Sides.** The first Magazine album came out in 1978, in the midst of the punk craze, but this band was way ahead of it. The menacing guitar intro instantly pulled me in and the words about being 'outside of everything' deeply resonated with my younger self. They still do.
11. **Don't Come Close.** Even though nowadays The Ramones are nearly a synonym of 'Punk Rock', they were always much more than that and this song is the proof.
12. **She Cracked.** The Modern Lovers only album successfully superimposes positive lyrics over a darker sound similar to the Velvet Underground or the Stooges. This one takes a strong stand against drugs when everyone was heavily indulging in them. Jonathan Richman has always been his own man; it takes guts to write about enjoying health food at home while everybody else is getting high.
13. **A Minor Aversion.** 'Eternally Yours', the 2nd Saints album contains some of the best music ever recorded, period. The marriage of Ed Kuepper's razor-sharp guitar and Chris Bailey's snarly vocals turns every song into an instant classic. I could have happily picked any of them.
14. **Love Kills.** Radio Birdman combines the best elements of the Stooges, The Doors and BÖC into a totally original lethal Australian package. With his twin guitar attack + piano, 'Radios Appear' was a perfect debut album and in my opinion this song was the standout tune. Deniz Tek is right up there with the best of them.
15. **The Whole of the Law.** Who other than Peter Perrett would use a criminally short ode to smack as the leading track of his first album? Most people didn't get it, but the ones who did were instantly hooked for life. This song is so beautiful, it hurts.



Photo: Matthias Frey

Album Launch: Sat 29 October - Statto Live House, Tokyo Japan

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Naruzy Suicide

Riot Missile

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For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Denis Gray: viciouskittenrecords@gmail.com

viciouskittenrecords.com

