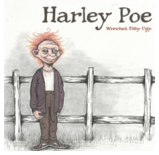
One of the most distinctive albums of the year, WRETCHED. FILTHY. UGLY. combines the jittery, hyperactive feel of acoustic folk rock and the trashiness of horror movies. The band behind it, Harley Poe, fabricates a unique sound all its own.

Singer/songwriter Joseph Whiteford has composed a collection of 10 electrifying songs. The lyrics are naive and callow one minute, then become bitterly frustrated and rebellious the next. Whiteford’s intense views of despair and derangement come off as catchy and even humorous at times. His lively personality keeps the music engaging and compelling without overindulging in mood swings, the confessional lines of melancholy accompanied by Kevin Philips’ busy acoustic bass riffing.



B-horror movies such as SATAN’S CHEERLEADERS and A TASTE OF BLOOD influenced the gore-splattered verses, and the use of sound clips from these past films also adds a flair of cheekiness. The opening track, “Gordon,” documents the rise and fall of a cannibal, as Whiteford narrates the chilling story of the title character stalking and eating his adolescent prey. As in the finales of other monster movies, an angry, violent mob gathers to disembowel the creature.

The revenge-fueled track “That Time of the Month” opens with a Western melody, as if someone were going face to face with their worst enemy. Whiteford sings, “You’re emotional to say the least, but you make a lovely beast.” His grief-stricken intentions are to shoot a silver bullet at the heartbreaker. Whiteford savors every minute as he achieves retribution in style.

The entire record consists of clever compositions and frenzied anthems. The government is falling apart and zombies have taken over in the apocalyptic “It’s Only the End of the World,” in which Whiteford rants, “The Earth will be a better place without you and me.” The set closes

with the anarchist track “Stick It to the Man.” You will undoubtedly find yourself chanting along to this punk tune.

WRETCHED. FILTHY. UGLY. is a wickedly entertaining album from start to finish, with Whiteford’s feisty attitude and the relentlessly catchy hooks dominating each dynamic track. To order the album, go to www.chainsmokingrecords.com .

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