



Martin Rev

To Live

Reissue (originally released 2003)
Release: 2 December 2022
CD/LP/digital



Like a blizzard in a snow globe

American indie label File 13 Records released what was already Martin Rev's sixth solo album in the autumn of 2003. The previous year, Rev and his musical partner Alan Vega had struck out in a new direction on their "American Supreme" album and Rev's solo works continued in a similar vein.

If "Strangeworld" from the year 2000 actually felt more like a timeless abstract of Martin Rev's entire spectrum of musical influences, "To Live", three years later, introduces more contemporary elements, including guitar samples for the first time.

«The sound of "To Live" was actually one I had already been using live on stage for a couple of years. The inspiration didn't come from the 2000's but probably from something much earlier although I couldn't specifically pinpoint from where. It's also related to the rhythm tech I was using.» Rev recalls.

The record met with mixed reactions on release. Some critics were wrongfooted by sequence-driven segments and the industrial rock characteristics of the late 1990s – not what they expected from a Rev album. In the same way that Suicide's revolutionary new sound was loved and hated in equal measure back in the 1970s, Rev was still polarizing opinion with his music some 30 years later.

But even if synthesizer drones and minimalist keyboard figures were less prominent on "To Live" it is fair to say that all of the tracks shared the inimitable language of form which made Martin Rev's sound so distinctive. Layers of rhythmic loops fade into Rev's sporadic, recitative spoken words which are as tender as they are threatening, building into a snow globe blizzard where chromed glitter and golden confetti dance wildly, haphazardly.

This is particularly striking on "Gutter Rock", an overmodulated, hypnotically charming slice of lounge exotica. And this very sound of antithesis, between hard drum machines, guitar salvos and Rev's intangible voice, in which every mood and sense of insecurity which foreshadowed the new millennium, especially in a city like Rev's New York, was shattered two years earlier on September 11.

"To Live" is not easy to digest, a work of contradictions which marks a transition in Martin Rev's overall output as a child of its time, worthy of special attention in his legacy.

- Daniel Jahn, February 2022



Tracklisting

- 1) To Live
- 2) In Your Arms
- 3) Black Ice
- 4) Gutter Rock
- 5) Shimmer
- 6) Painted
- 7) Places I Go
- 8) Lost In The Orbit
- 9) Jaded
- 10) Our Roads
- 11) Search For Stone
- 12) Water
- 13) Stormy

Promotion

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