

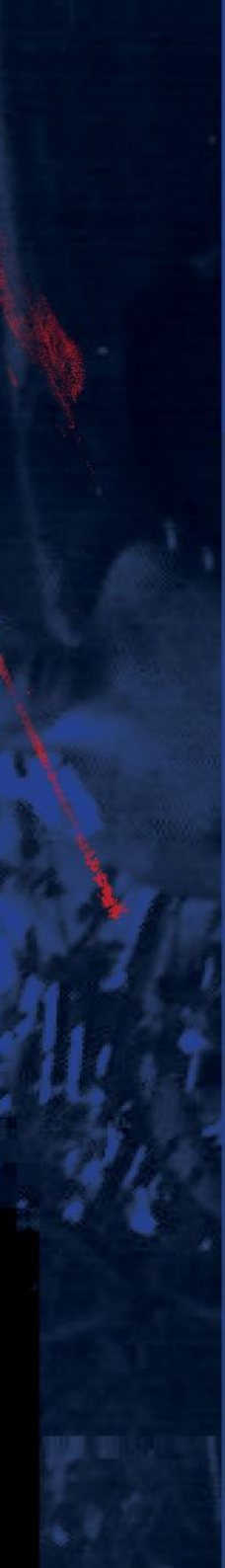
INTERNAL / EXTERNAL





"I WOULD'VE GONE WEIRDER WITH THE MUSIC, BUT I WANTED TO BE SMART. I DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO SAY, 'OKAY, THIS IS HIS WEIRD ABSTRACT THING,' AND DISMISS THE ALBUM. I WORKED TOO HARD ON IT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN..."

(JC ON PFTY)



2009 marked the release of Julian Casablancas' first solo album, *Phrazes for the Young*. With new influences from new wave and electronica, Casablancas showed that he can do more than what he's comfortable with, although he admits that he still played it safe. The album was a way for Casablancas to be truly solo after playing in New York rock band, The Strokes, for over 11 years. The album acted as a catalyst that would eventually result in the formation of Julian Casablancas + The Voidz. A daring, unrestrained sextet that's a "web of cool musical taste and not giving a fuck."



Backing Casablancas on tour for Phrazes for the Young was the Sick Six live band, which included keyboardist/guitarist Jeff Kite (lead guitarist of indie pop group Beat Club) and drummer Alex Carapetis (who also toured with hard rock band Wolfmother). Between tours, the group began collaborating in a New York City studio on new songs, many of which would end up in The Voidz's debut album, *Tyranny*. Later, they would work together again along with bassist/synthist Jacob "Jake"



Bercovici on *I Like the Night*, an unfinished, unofficially released song recorded for an advertisement for the French fashion label, Azzaro.

When recording his next album, Casablancas decided to continue to collaborate with other musicians. After recruiting mutual friends and guitarists Jeramy "Beardo" Gritter (of punk rock band Whitestarr) and Amir Yaghmai, Julian Casablancas + the Voidz was forged, using Casablancas' name and clout to draw attention to the new group.





“The Voidz are a band that has formed over the last 4 years thru different music connections and friends in NYC and LA. They bonded over their love of beat-driven music and aggressive as well as avant-garde music but with the power of modern harmonies to make it catchy and powerful. A punk band that can also play any style of music, and take pride in their versatility” (cultrecords.com)

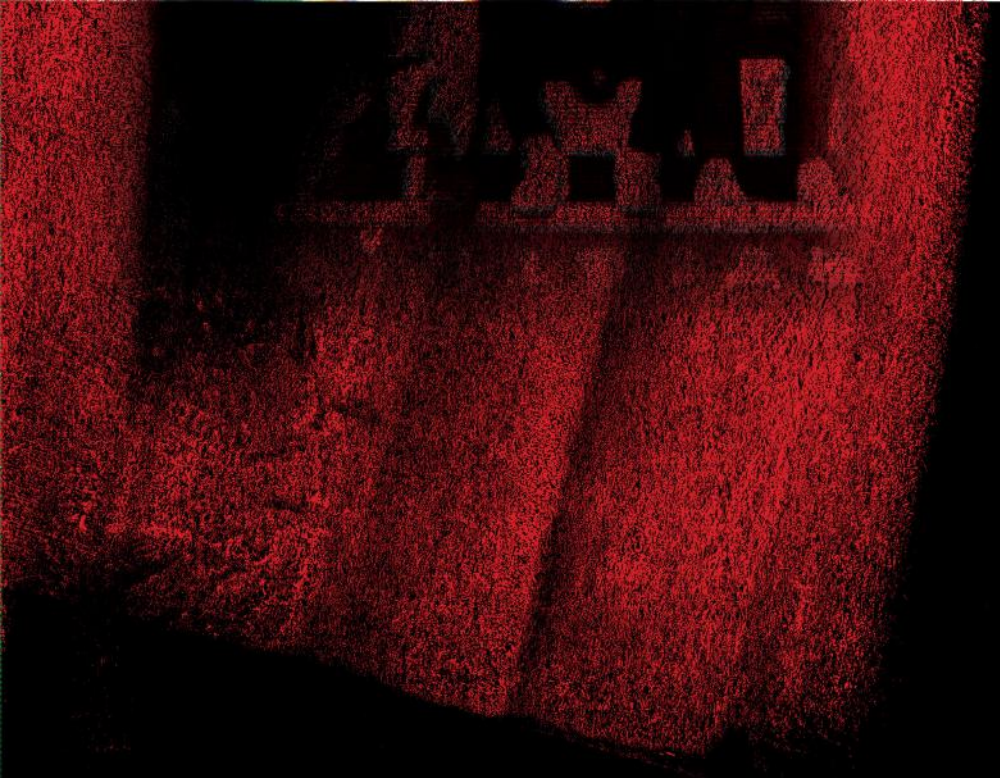



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In 2014, Julian Casablancas + The Voidz released their debut album, *Tyranny*. A belligerent, indignant protest record discussing all that's wrong in the modern world. Greedy, colossal oil companies, police brutality, our press becoming more censored and not-so-free, Mother Nature reaching her death, depression. These woes are carried by a whiplash of sounds and genres—drawing from 90's punk, afrobeat, video game tunes, metal, hard rock, and a bit of synth pop.



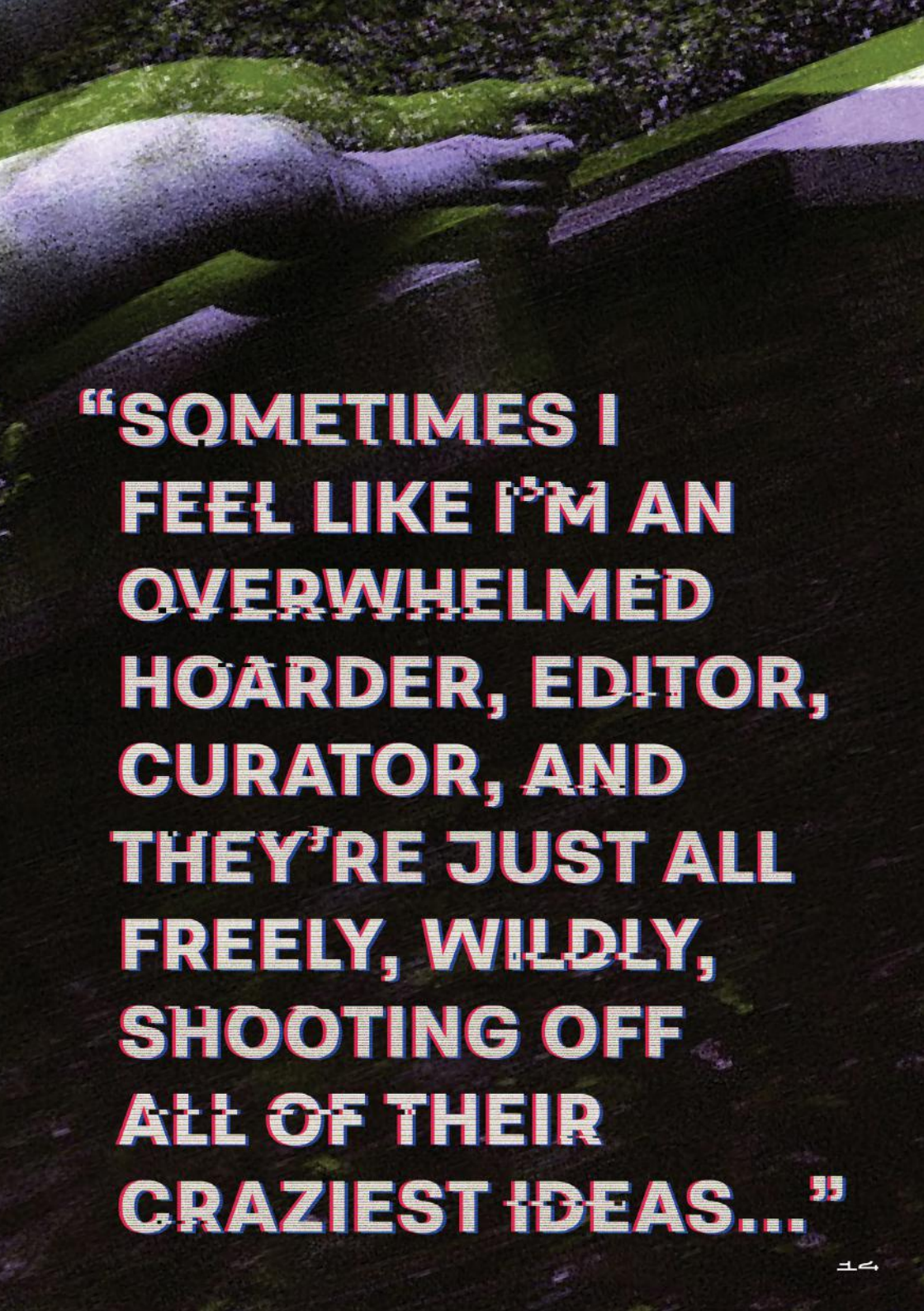


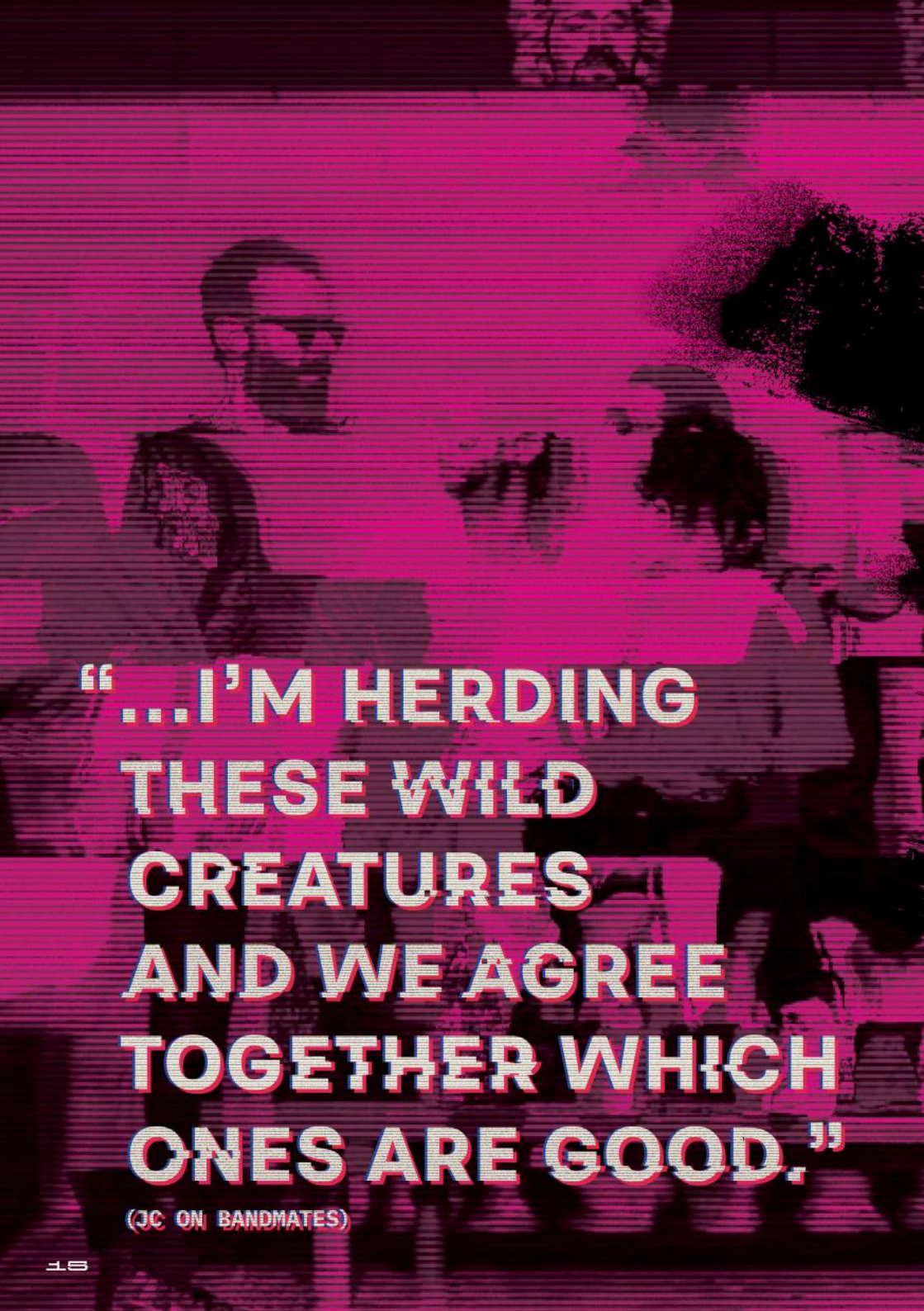
Tyranny's fourth track, *Human Sadness*, is where The Voidz had reached their zenith and is widely considered as their magnum opus. With a length of almost 11 minutes, The Voidz take the listener on a ride through five different musical fragments, all woven together. Each subsequent listen after the first will never feel the same and the length of the song stops feeling so long. It's a requiem





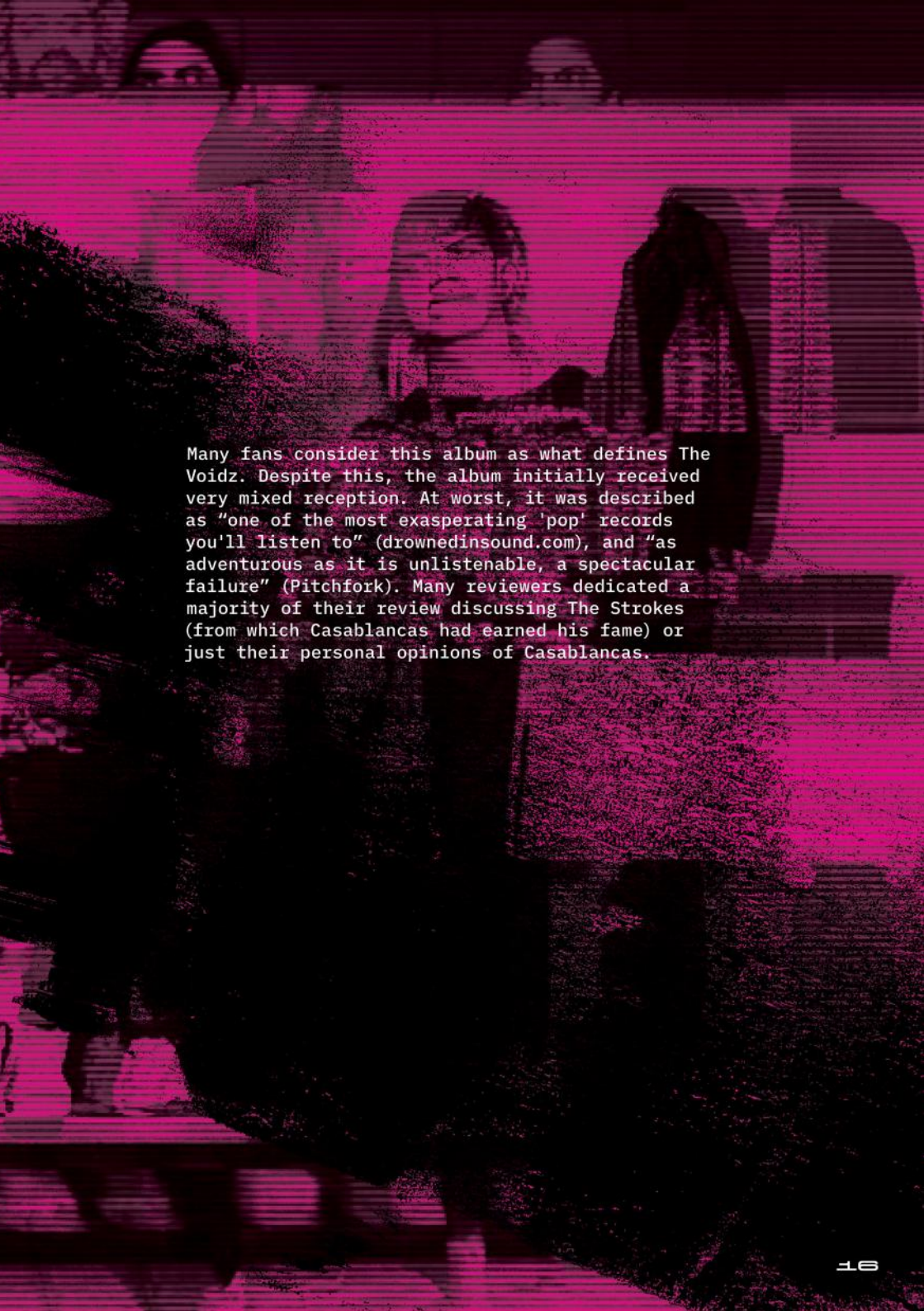
for Casablancas' estranged father and prominent modeling agent, John Casablancas, who died in 2013. Yet, Casablancas' writing style allows the lyrics to mold themselves into whatever the listener needs to hear. Halfway through the album is *Father Electricity* which opens with synth beats and afrobeat inspired drums that are eventually interrupted by a wailing guitar. Filled with unexpected distortion and rushed vocals, the song sounds like personified madness. Towards the end of the album is *Nintendo Blood*. It starts off with melting keys and video game chimes and ends with a merciless riff and high-pitched autotuned ramblings which turn into aggravated belts.


"SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I'M AN OVERWHELMED HOARDER, EDITOR, CURATOR, AND THEY'RE JUST ALL FREELY, WILDLY, SHOOTING OFF ALL OF THEIR CRAZIEST IDEAS..."

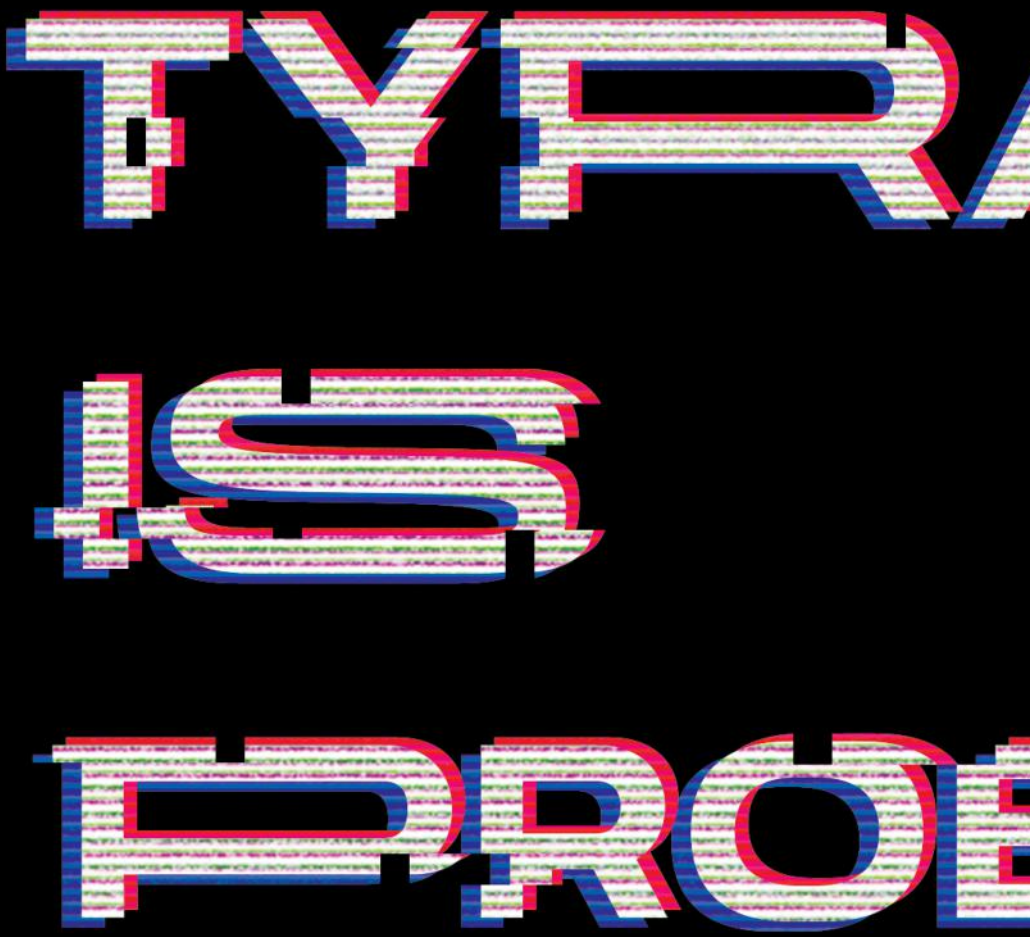


"...I'M HERDING THESE WILD CREATURES AND WE AGREE TOGETHER WHICH ONES ARE GOOD."

(JC ON BANDMATES)



Many fans consider this album as what defines The Voidz. Despite this, the album initially received very mixed reception. At worst, it was described as “one of the most exasperating 'pop' records you'll listen to” (drownedinsound.com), and “as adventurous as it is unlistenable, a spectacular failure” (Pitchfork). Many reviewers dedicated a majority of their review discussing The Strokes (from which Casablancas had earned his fame) or just their personal opinions of Casablancas.

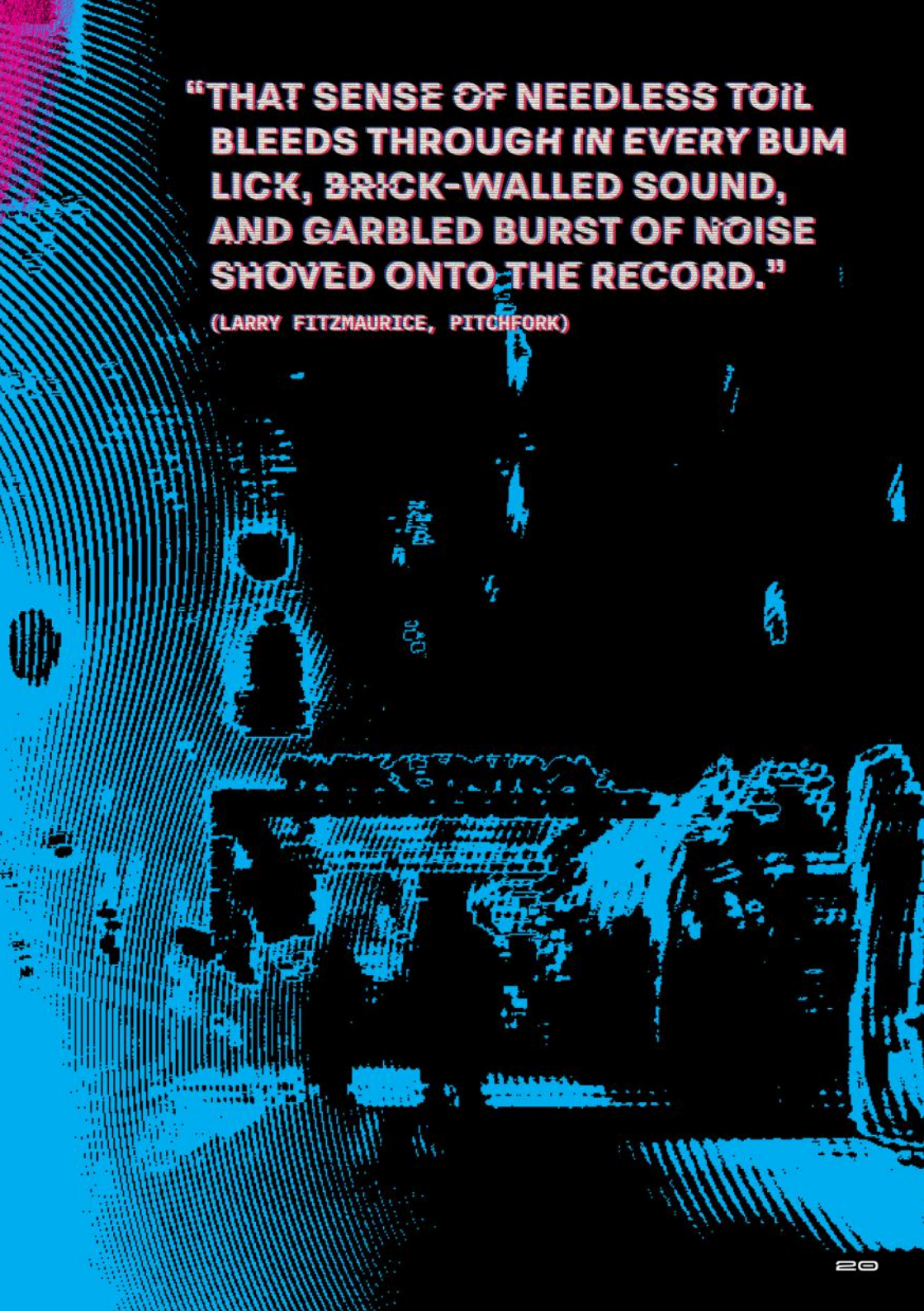

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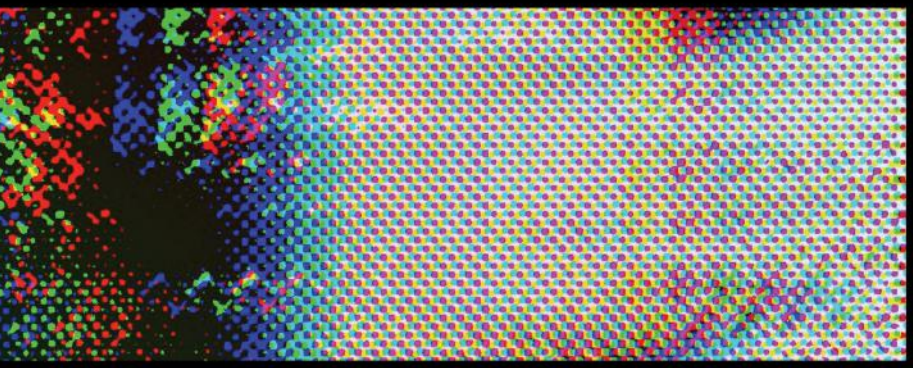
One of my favorites comes from Pitchfork. Contributor Larry Fitzmaurice seems to have a personal vendetta against Casablancas. He spends the first three paragraphs of his spite-filled review negatively pounding The Strokes, Casablancas' solo album, and Casablancas himself.

"THAT SENSE OF NEEDLESS TOIL BLEEDS THROUGH IN EVERY BUM LICK, BRICK-WALLED SOUND, AND GARBLED BURST OF NOISE SHOVED ONTO THE RECORD."

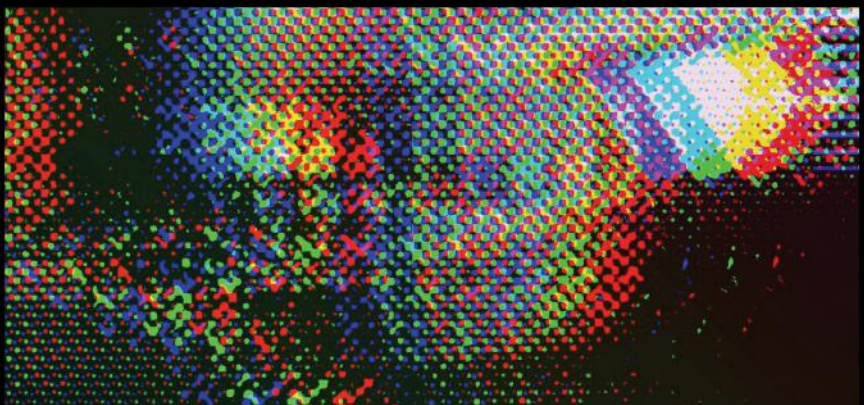
(LARRY FITZMAURICE, PITCHFORK)

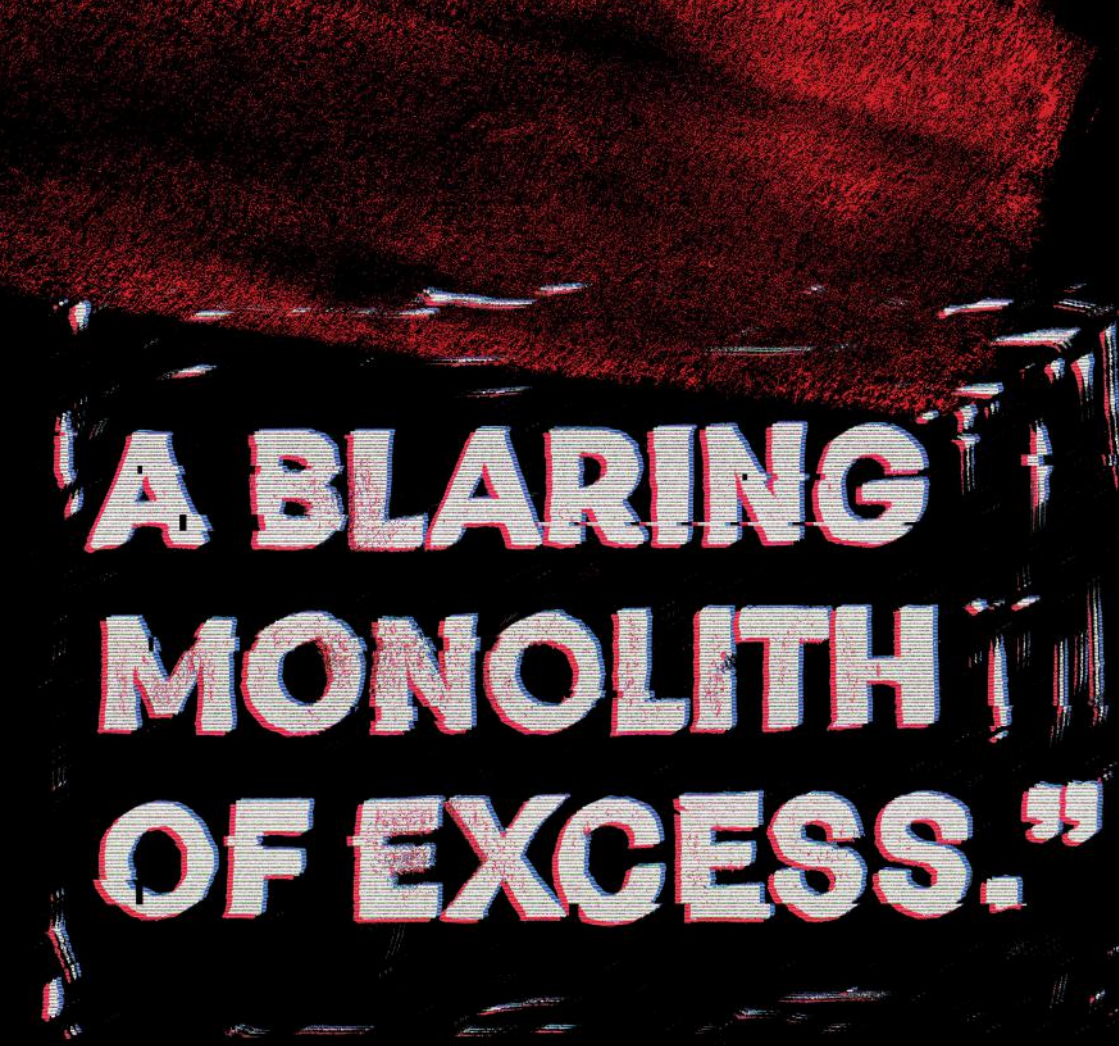


"TYRANNY IS DESIGNED TO BE IMPENETRABLE,



When he finally introduces *Tyranny* in the fourth paragraph, he continues to mention and relate the album to The Strokes' *Angles* and *Comedown Machine*. Eventually, we get to the scathing review of the experimental rock album from a man who might just dislike experimental rock.





That's the thing with The Voidz, they are excess. They're one of those bands that you may have to listen to a few times before falling into an addiction. They're overwhelming, unexpected, and unconventional. Ironically, Fitzmaurice's negative descriptions of *Tyranny* actually descibe it very well. I think "a blaring monolith of excess" is a great way to summarize the album.


THE VOI







Casablancas' history with The Strokes has always been a problem for The Voidz. Despite the band's efforts to stand on their own, they will always be considered "Julian's weird side-project." With only two albums released in 2014 and 2018, it's tough for them not be compared to the band that already has 23 years and 6 studio albums



under its belt. But, being connected to The Strokes does have its positives. Many of those who are fans of The Strokes have become fans of The Voidz and Casablacas' fame quickly brought them recognition. After gaining traction under the name "Julian Casablancas + the Voidz," the band decided it was time to change things up.



WE DIDN'T BECOME A BAND OVERNIGHT; WE BECAME A BAND THROUGH HARD WORK."

(JBG)









No longer wanting to be perceived as a side-project of Casablancas, the band would shorten their name to The Voidz in 2017. A video of Casablancas' "initiation" was posted to the band's YouTube channel. The video shows the group being stalked by zombies while watching a horror movie showing Casablancas joining the rest of the band members' vampire-esque cult by drinking from a laced chalice. After essentially calling the movie shitty and leaving the theater, the rest of the video depicts the frontman being restrained by his bandmates and branded with the band's new logo on his chest.

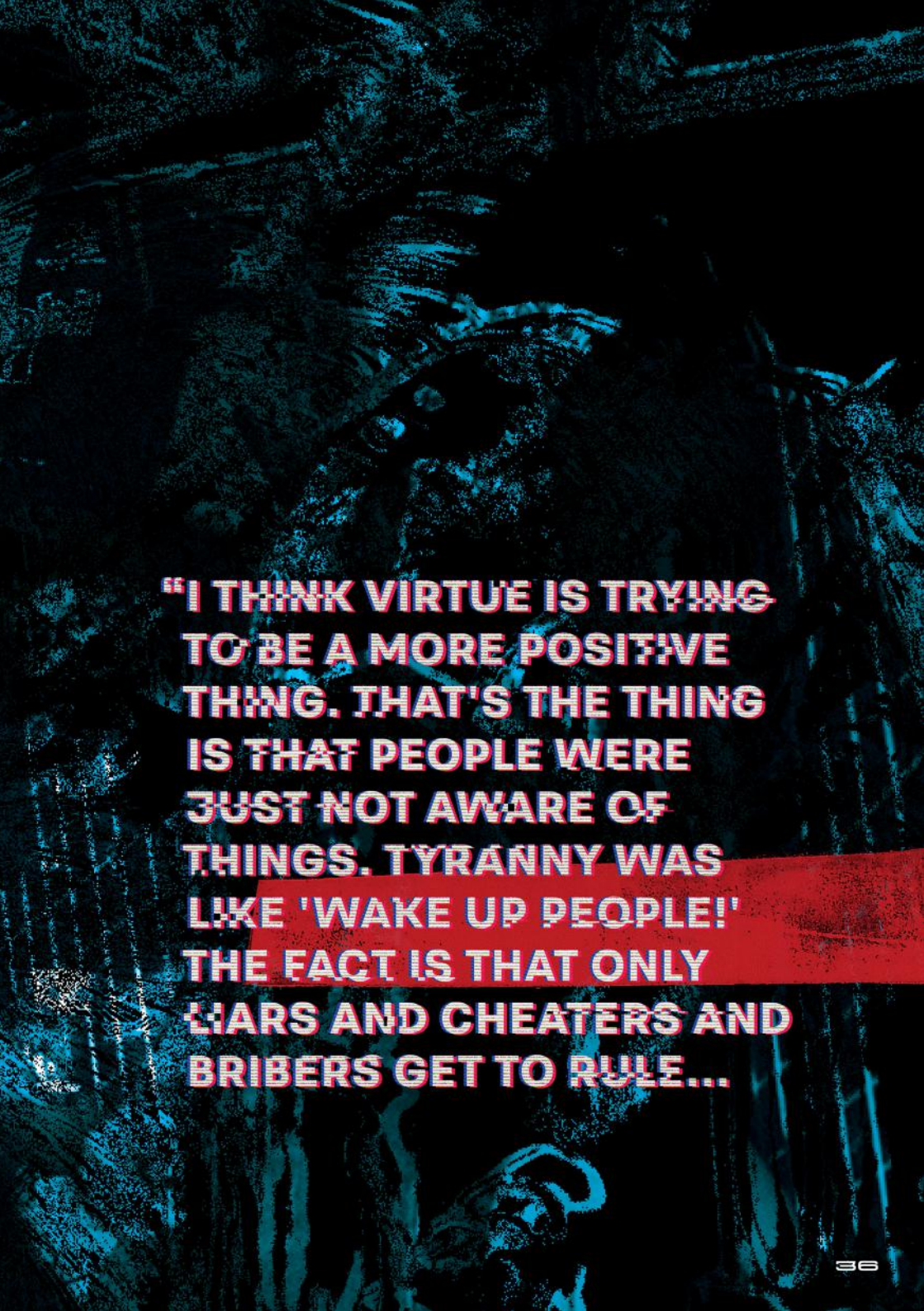


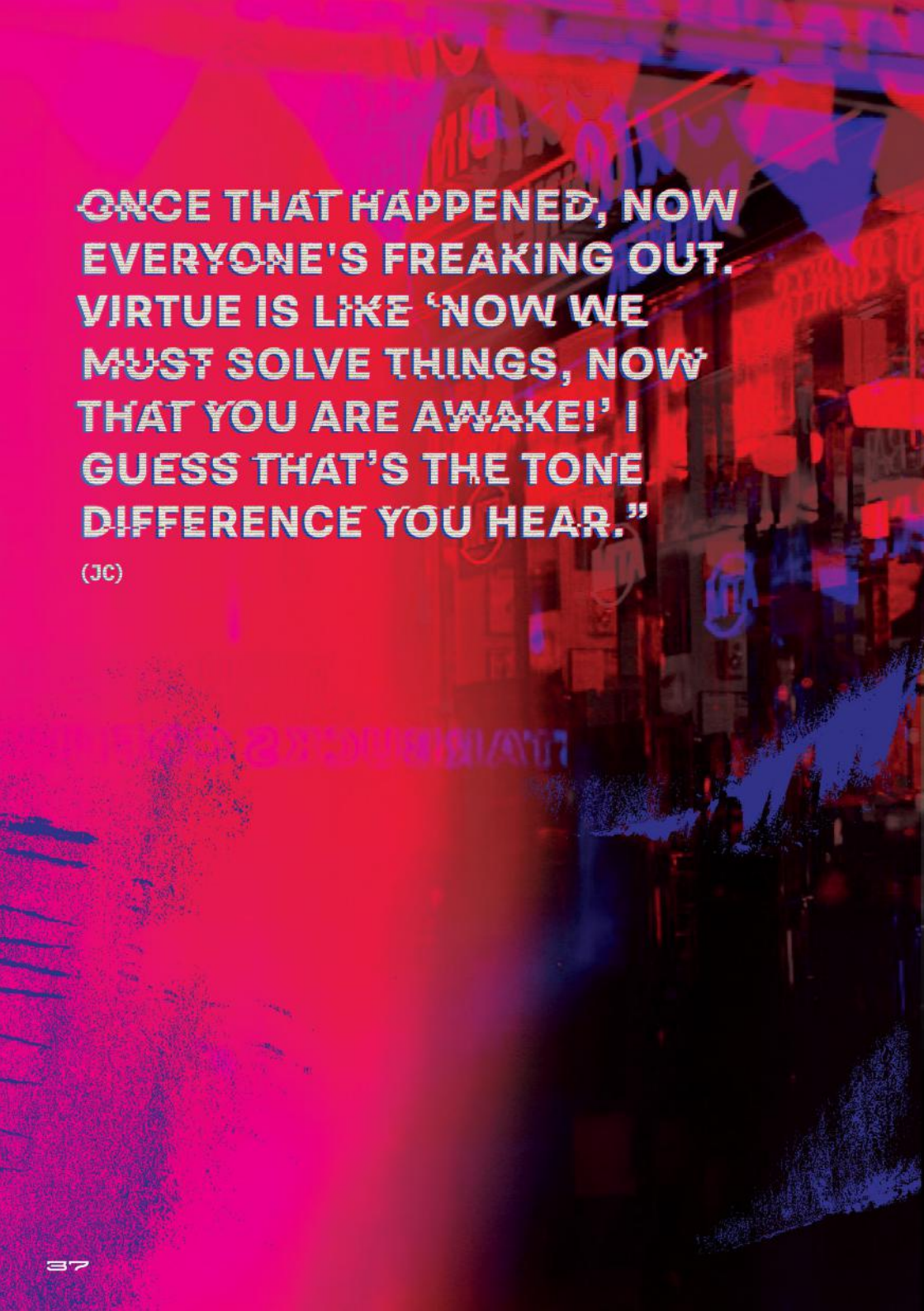
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Shortly after in 2018, *Virtue* was released. *Virtue* is the clarity that follows *Tyranny*'s outburst. While still angry at the world, the record's lyrics tend to be more aimed at the self. This album gives drops of 80's nostalgia while also once again fusing genres and noises such as new wave, metal (again, yet sparingly), electronic,


"I THINK VIRTUE IS TRYING TO BE A MORE POSITIVE THING. THAT'S THE THING IS THAT PEOPLE WERE JUST NOT AWARE OF THINGS. TYRANNY WAS LIKE 'WAKE UP PEOPLE!' THE FACT IS THAT ONLY LIARS AND CHEATERS AND BRIBERS GET TO RULE...



ONCE THAT HAPPENED, NOW EVERYONE'S FREAKING OUT. VIRTUE IS LIKE 'NOW WE MUST SOLVE THINGS, NOW THAT YOU ARE AWAKE!' I GUESS THAT'S THE TONE DIFFERENCE YOU HEAR."

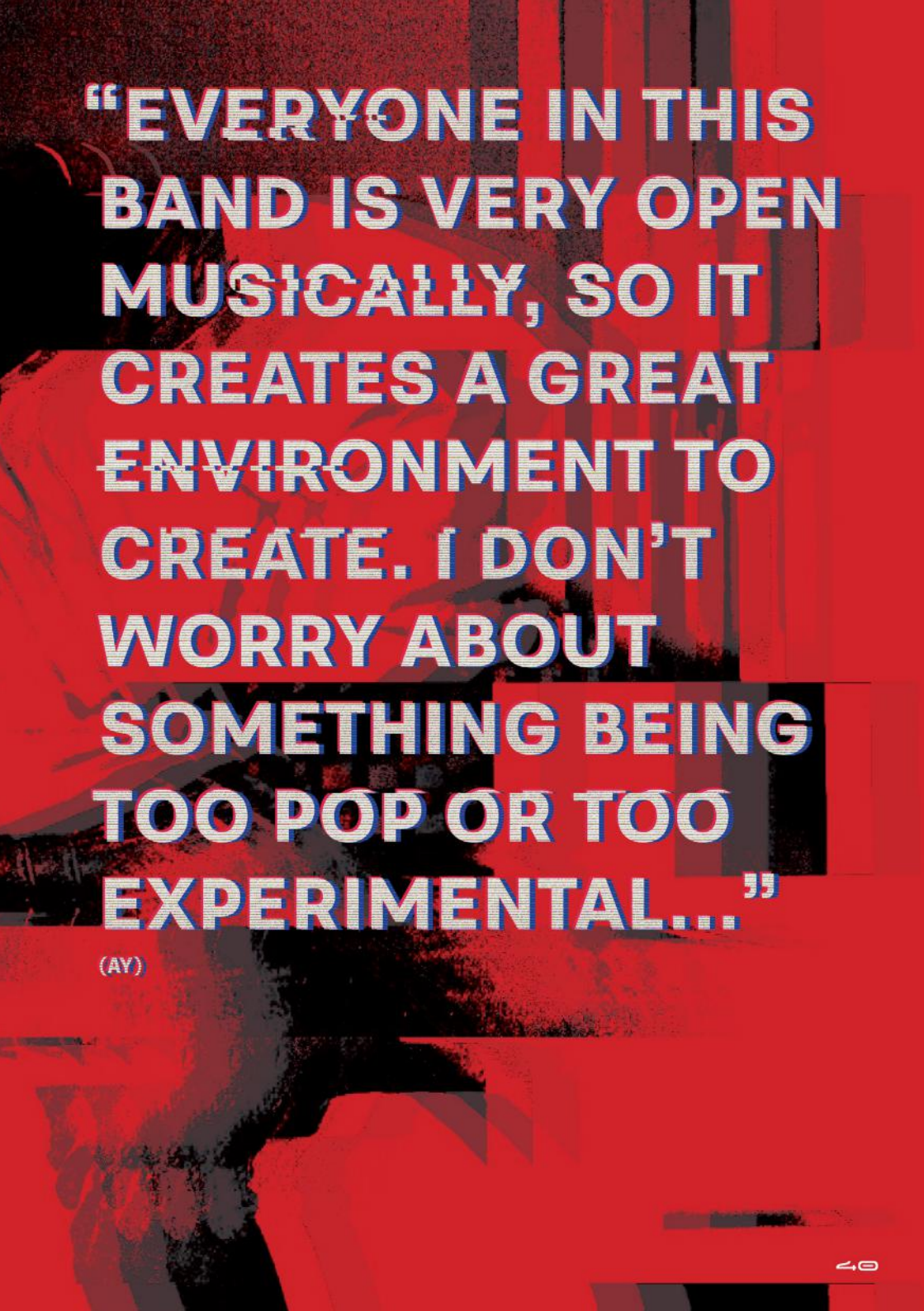
(JC)



occasional middle eastern influences, soft rock, and refreshingly, pop. The introduction of bouncy pop beats is what initially kept me away from *Virtue*. It wasn't what I was used to or expected from them. I wanted *Tyranny 2.0*. But, a consistent sound isn't what you'll get from a band like The Voidz. Although Casablancas did reveal to Billboard that

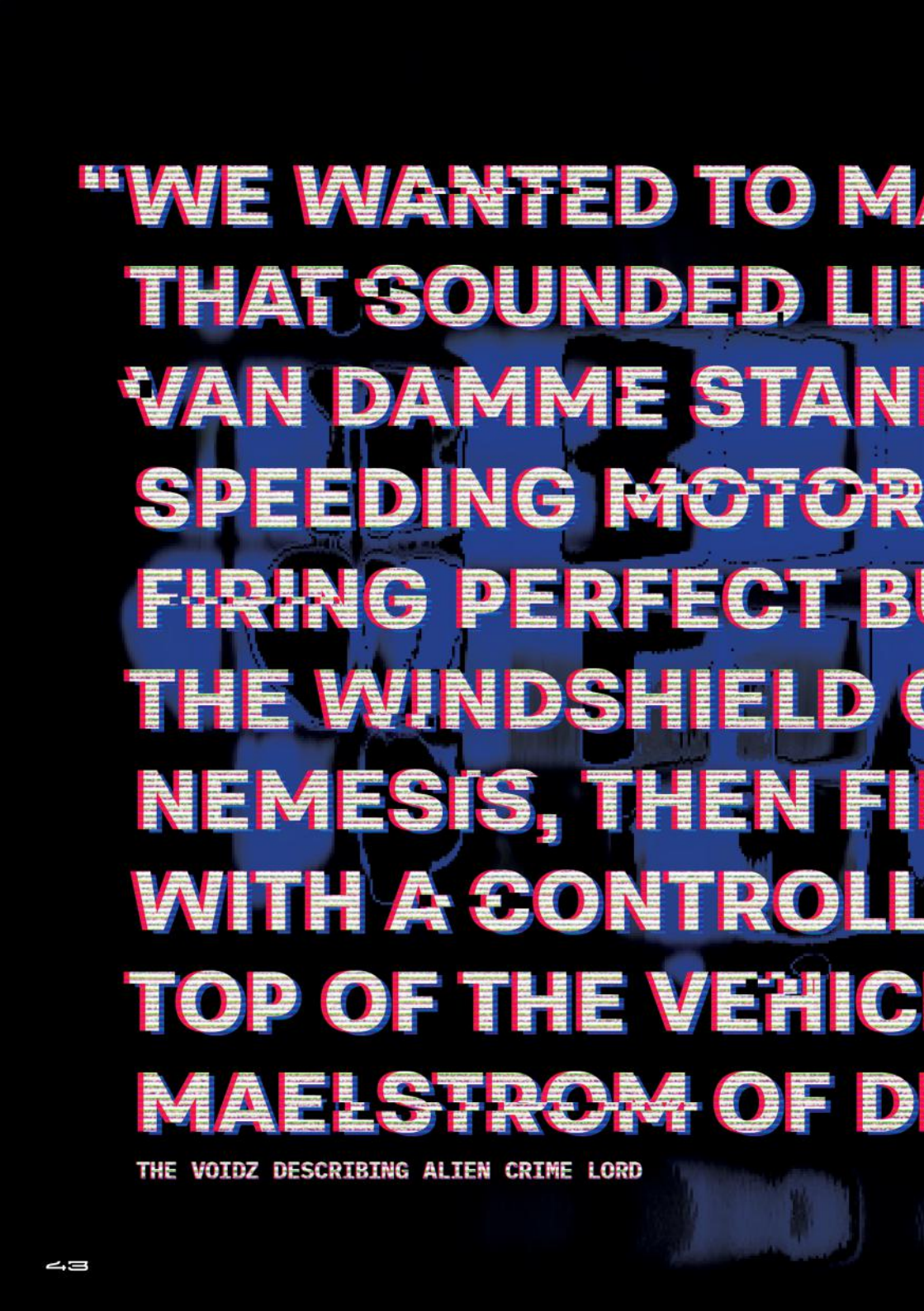


they purposefully made *Virtue* a bit easier to listen to than *Tyranny* in order to "be able to afford" to keep doing The Voidz, the introduction of these pop moments doesn't feel forced or unwanted. It seems as though the band is loosening up a bit, allowing themselves to branch beyond anger-fueled rock. *Virtue* is where the band opens up musically.

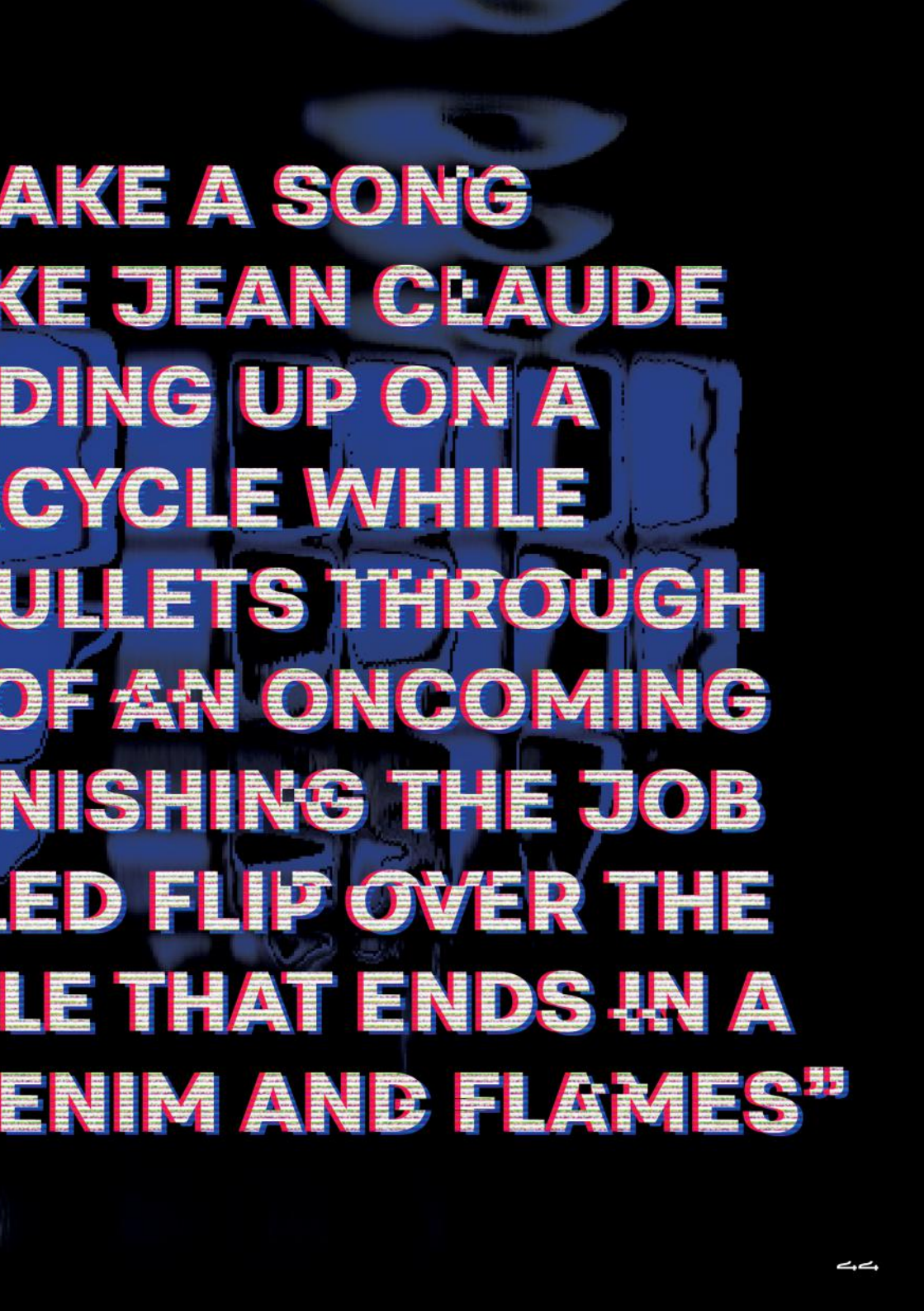

“EVERYONE IN THIS BAND IS VERY OPEN MUSICALLY, SO IT CREATES A GREAT ENVIRONMENT TO CREATE. I DON’T WORRY ABOUT SOMETHING BEING TOO POP OR TOO EXPERIMENTAL...”
(AY)







THE VOIDZ DESCRIBING ALIEN CRIME LORD


AKE A SONG
KE JEAN CLAUDE
DING UP ON A
CYCLE WHILE
ULLETS THROUGH
OF AN ONCOMING
NISHING THE JOB
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LE THAT ENDS IN A
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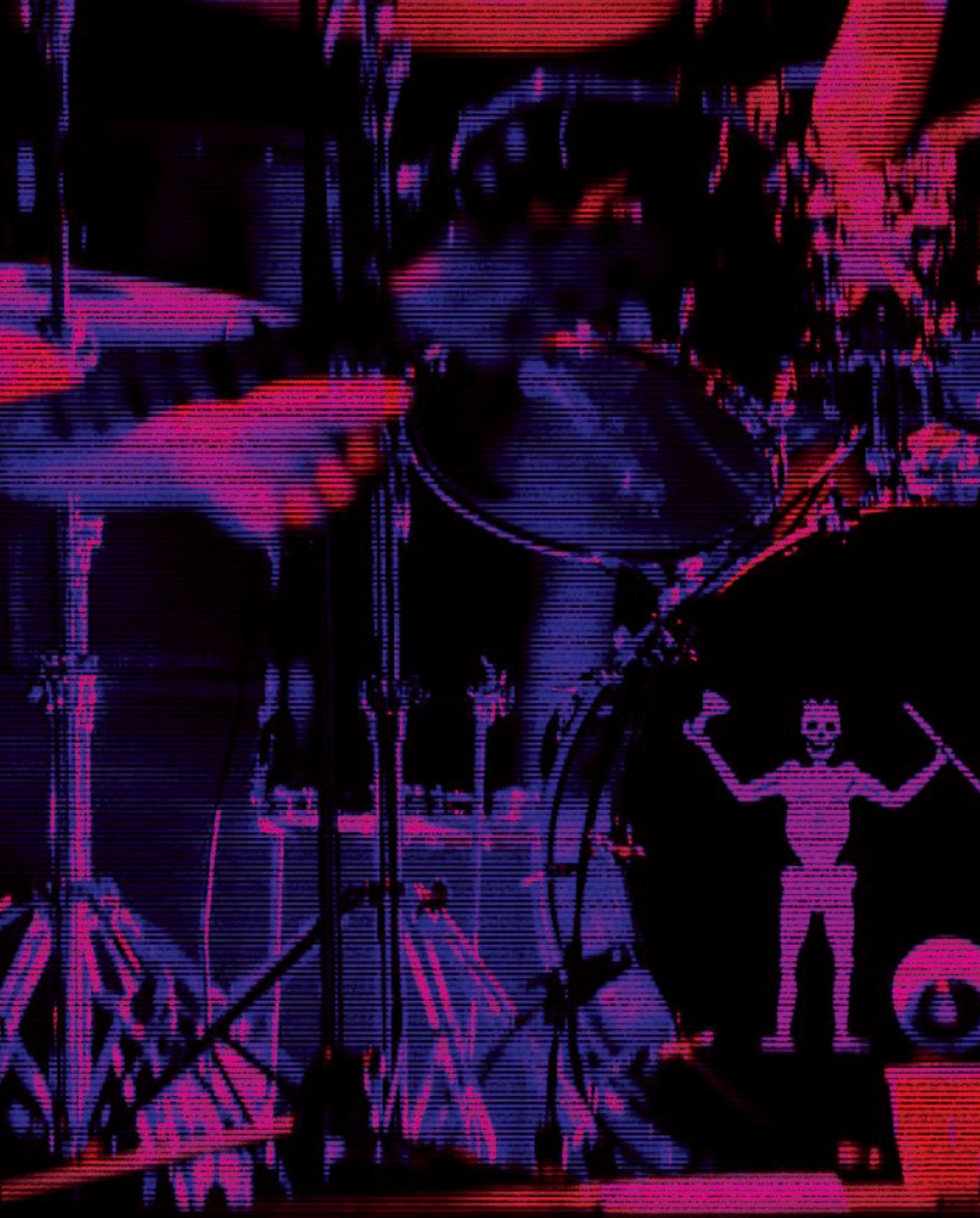


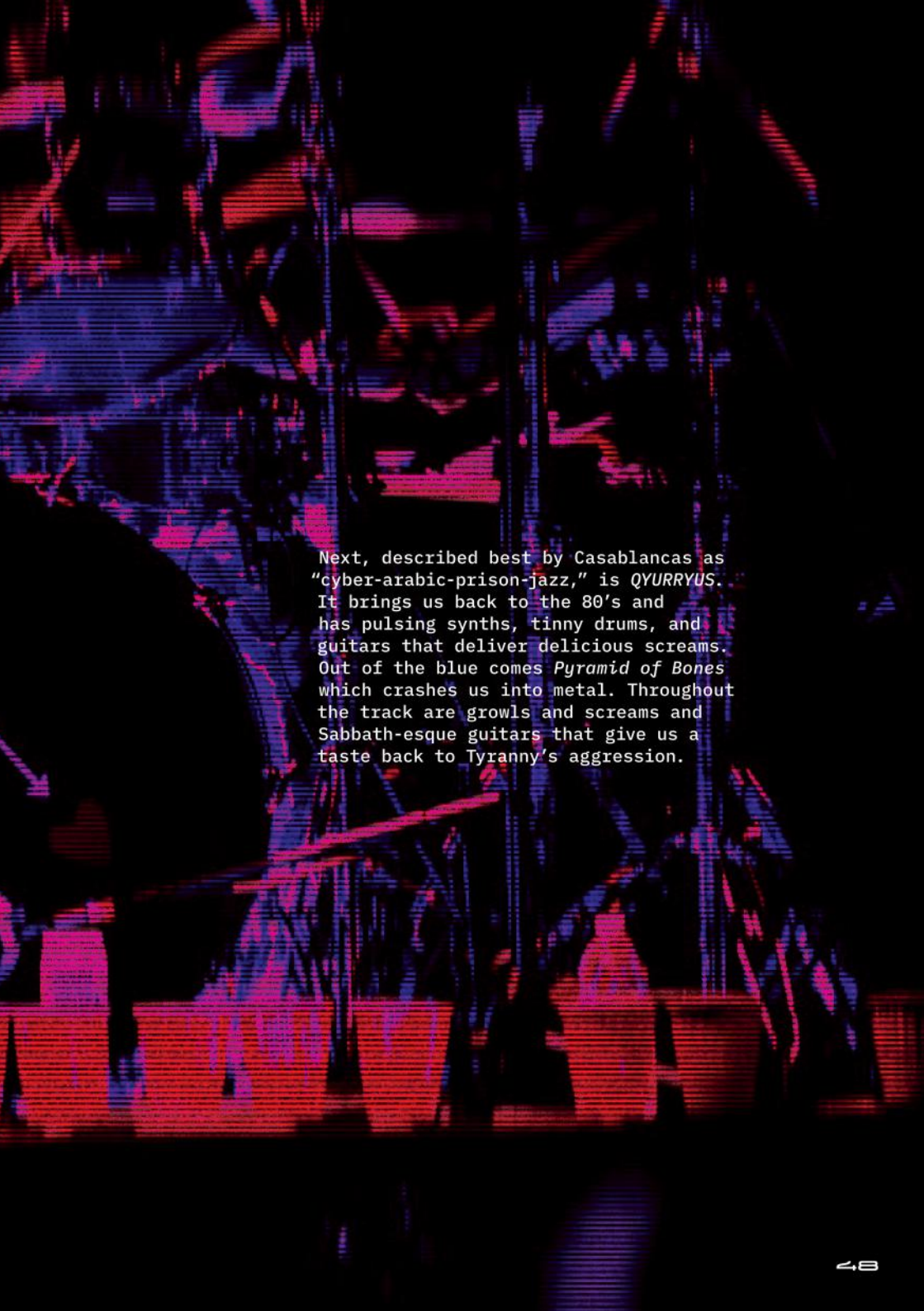
While *Tyranny* has an almost consistent loud punk sound, *Virtue* changes things up even more often. It doesn't flow too well as most albums do, but it does keep you questioning what will come next. The first three songs come from very different worlds. *Leave It In My Dreams* is bright and almost polished new wave backed by metallic riffs and smooth synths.





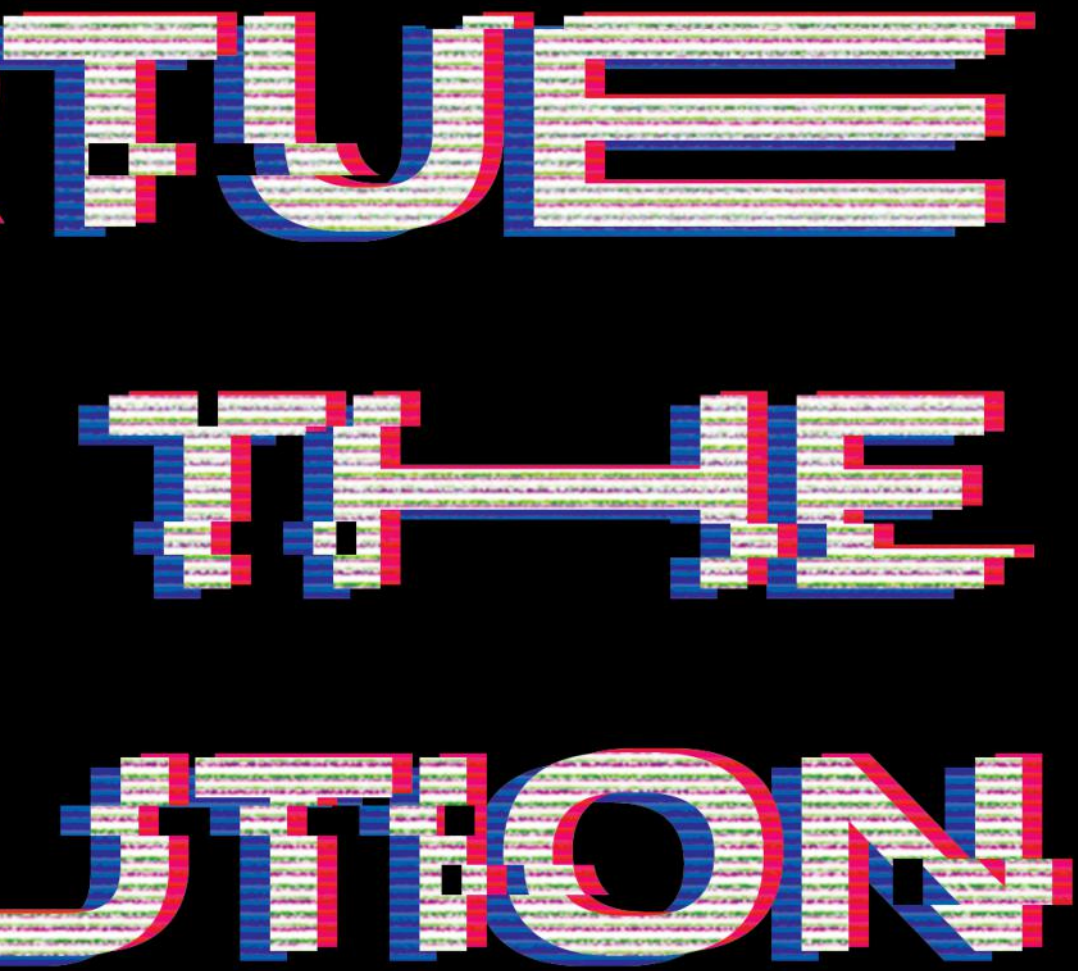






Next, described best by Casablancas as "cyber-arabic-prison-jazz," is *QYURRYUS*. It brings us back to the 80's and has pulsing synths, tinny drums, and guitars that deliver delicious screams. Out of the blue comes *Pyramid of Bones* which crashes us into metal. Throughout the track are growls and screams and Sabbath-esque guitars that give us a taste back to Tyranny's aggression.


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