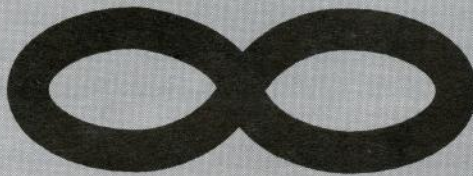
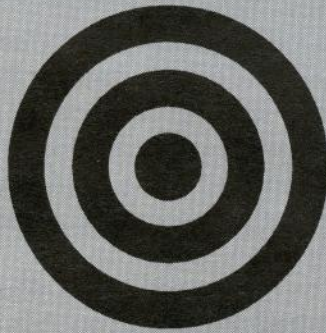
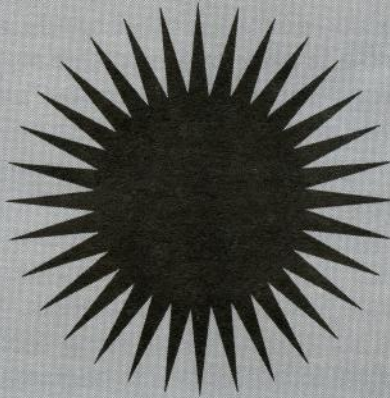


SWANS



THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR

JANUARY 23, 1995



SWANS/YOUNG GOD RECORDS

SWANS: THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR: RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 23, 1995

This is the first studio album from the legendary NYC group (now relocated to rural Georgia) in 3 years, and they've come back stronger than ever. *The Great Annihilator* is a fiercely individual album of varied and colliding textures. It shifts constantly in mood, from hard violence to lilting melancholy, from circular grooves to atmospheric abstractions. SWANS' astonishing output since their inception in 1982 has seen them progress constantly, veering wildly from proto-industrial grind, to slab-of-noise militant disco, to bad-vibes psychedelic "film" music, to darkly ambient acoustic songs, and now back again, ripping apart all genres, firmly in their own world.

Though SWANS have always kept their distance from their contemporaries in the "underground" as well as the mainstream, they've influenced countless other bands, abandoning each sound or approach as they felt it constricting into a familiar or predictable style. In their early days, at a time when New Wave disco and jangly college-pop were the popular "alternative," SWANS came on like a rain of sledgehammer blows to the body, with what many critics have called some of the most powerful, uncompromising, crushing rock music ever made. Then, just as their reputation was ascending and commercial success was a real possibility, they jettisoned what they now saw as a stylistic straight-jacket and moved on. In their prolific output as SWANS, and other related projects (see discography), this need to challenge themselves and their audience has led them to move past the standard bass-drums-guitars (though they still often use these with characteristic visceral force) to incorporate everything from acoustic guitars and pianos to nail guns to full string sections to Indian oboes to mellotrons and organs to choirs of backwards vocals to accordions to baglamas to tape loops and samples to sheet metal.

Founder/producer/singer M.Gira and his longtime collaborator/co-singer/co-arranger Jarboe now see SWANS not as a band, but as a free venue for doing whatever they feel like musically, whenever they feel like it, without having to inhabit the tiny world of conventions inherent in the usual "rock band" lineup. The thread running through it all will always be their genuine commitment to stretching their own - and by extension the listener's - limits, a rare trait these days in a musical environment highly infected with narrow marketing strategies and instantly co-opted "rebellion."

Gira considers *The Great Annihilator* to be the best SWANS album yet, taken as a whole. To enjoy the full benefit of its intended effect, listen to it all the way through in one sitting.

As is usual with SWANS, a wide variety of guest musicians from other bands, apart from the core members Jarboe and Gira, are featured in these recordings. Among them are members, current and past, of: Ministry, Pigface, Material, Prong, Killing Joke, Revolting Cocks, and Foetus. (See credits.)

Of related interest: Also upcoming this year will be the album *Drainland - 10 Songs by M. Gira*, featuring Gira, Jarboe, and Bill Rieflin of Ministry. A book of Gira's fiction *Empathy and Other Stories* will be published by Henry Rollins' publishing company *2.13.61* in February of '95. Also upcoming is a solo album by Jarboe... Interested journalists writing articles or interviews may obtain copies of these on request.

For additional information/publicity contact, call: Invisible Records 312-808-0222, fax: 312-808-1117



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Credits/words

THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR

SWANS DISCOGRAPHY

SWANS

4 SONG E.P. - 1982

FILTH ALBUM - 1983

COP ALBUM 1984

YOUNG GOD E.P. - 1984

TIME IS MONEY 12" - 1985

GREED ALBUM - 1985

A SCREW 12" - 1985/6

HOLY MONEY ALBUM - 1986

NEW MIND 12" - 1987

CHILDREN OF GOD 2X ALBUM - 1987

FEEL GOOD NOW 2XALBUM - 1987

LOVE WILL TEAR US APART 12" - 1988

THE BURNING WORLD ALBUM - 1989

WHITE LIGHT FROM THE MOUTH OF INFINITY 2XALBUM - 1990/1

BODY TO BODY, JOB TO JOB ALBUM - 1991

(COMPILATION OUT-TAKES/LIVE MATERIAL 1982-5)

LOVE OF LIFE ALBUM - 1992

OMNISCIENCE LIVE ALBUM - 1993

THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR ALBUM - 1995

UNOFFICIAL BOOTLEGS:

PUBLIC CASTRATION IS A GOOD IDEA, LIVE 2XALBUM - 1984-5

ANONYMOUS BODIES IN AN EMPTY ROOM, LIVE - 1990

KILL THE CHILD, LIVE - 1991

SKIN/THE WORLD OF SKIN:

BLOOD, WOMEN, ROSES ALBUM - 1985

SHAME, HUMILITY, REVENGE ALBUM - 1988

TEN SONGS FOR ANOTHER WORLD ALBUM - 1990

JARBOE

13 MASKS ALBUM - 1992

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE LTD. ALBUM - 1993

M. GIRA

DRAINLAND ALBUM - 1995

1. **IN** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; JARBOE - BACKGROUND VOCALS, SOUNDS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR, NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. 2. **I AM THE SUN** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC 12 STRING GUITAR, SOUNDS, VOCAL; JARBOE - BACKGROUND VOCALS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS, PERCUSSION, SOUNDS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** AND I AM THE SUN. I RISE ABOVE THE WORLD. AND WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT, I KILL ANOTHER CHILD. AND I AM INSANE. I CRAWL INTO YOUR MOUTH. I GROW LIKE A FLOWER. I GROW A SUICIDE. AND I AM THE SUN. AND I AM THE LIGHT. AND I AM THE SUN. YEAH I AM THE LIGHT. AND I AM THE DOG. I CUT OUT MY EYES. YEAH I WILL NULLIFY, MY TRUE LOVE CREATION. AND I AM THE SUN. I LOVE EVERYONE. I LIVE INSIDE YOUR CHEST. I GROW LIKE A CANCER. AND I AM THE SUN. AND I AM THE LIGHT. YEAH I AM THE SUN. YEAH I AM THE LIGHT. I LOVE EVERYONE. I LOVE EVERYONE. 3. **SHE LIVES!** M. GIRA - ACOUSTIC GUITAR, SOUNDS, VOCAL, ELECTRIC 12 STRING (OUTRO); JARBOE - ORGAN, BACKGROUND VOCAL (OUTRO); BILL RIEFLIN - 12 STRING ACOUSTIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR (OUTRO); NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR (OUTRO); TED PARSONS - DRUMS (OUTRO). **WORDS:** NOW I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU, FOR GOING INSANE. EVERY SECOND THAT YOU SUFFER, IS A LOSS THAT I GAIN. EVERY BREATH IS A DRAIN DOWN, DOWN INTO A HOLE. AND YOUR MIND IS A SHRINKING THING, IT WAS CRUSHED BY YOUR SKULL. NOW YOU FEEL TIME UNFOLDING, DEEP IN YOUR CHEST. AND YOUR BODY'S EXPANDING, NOW THERE'S NONE OF YOU LEFT. SO I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU, FOR LOSING YOUR MIND. YEAH YOU BURNED JUST LIKE JOAN OF ARC, PURIFIED BY THE FLAMES. YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'RE ALIVE! NOW I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU, FOR THE LIGHT THAT YOU SPREAD. AND MAGNESIUM AND SULPHUR, AND THE FEAR IN YOUR HEAD. AND I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU, YOU'RE NOTHING SO NEW. EVERY TIME THAT YOU TOUCH IT, IT'LL TURN AGAINST YOU. NOW YOUR FUTURE'S A COLD THING, DOWN IN THE DAMP GROUND. AND YOUR MEMORY'S A LEAD ROOM, CONTAINING THIS SOUND. SO I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU, FOR KILLING YOUR MIND. ALL THE LIFE THAT YOU BLED OUT, WELL I STEAL IT FOR MINE. YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'RE ALIVE! 4. **CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC 12 STRING, VOCAL; JARBOE - BACKGROUND VOCALS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; TED PARSONS - DRUMS. **WORDS:** THE SECRET SIGN OF A CHARMED EXISTENCE, IS THE SHINY LIQUID ON HER LIPS. AND THE ECSTASY THAT COMES WITH HER IMAGE, GROWS FROM THE POWER THAT THE MONEY GIVES. AND SHE'S GOT A CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE, AND SHE'S JUST FLOATING IN SPACE. YEAH SHE'S GOT A CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE, AND ALL HER CHILDREN WANT A SUCK AND A TASTE OF OH, HER CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE. YEAH, HER CELEBRITY LIFE. AND SHE'S JUST A DRUG ADDICTION, AND A SELF-REFLECTING IMAGE OF A NARCOTIZED MIND. THE SECRET WISDOM OF 120 DAYS IS HIDDEN DEEP IN BETWEEN HER LEGS. AND SEXUAL TRANSCENDENCE IS RESERVED FOR THE WEALTHY, BUT IS ONLY ONE JOY THAT MONEY CAN MAKE. SHE'S GOT A CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE, AND SHE'S GOT A GLOWING WHITE FACE. YEAH SHE'S GOT A CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE. AND SHE TIES HER NAKED CHILDREN UP WITH WIRES AND LACE. OH, HER CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE IS THE PRODUCT OF A CELEBRITY MIND, AND HER CELEBRITY MOUTH IS THE PERFECT IMAGE OF THE END OF TIME. OH, WE'RE ALIVE. OH, WE'RE ALIVE. OH, MY CELEBRITY LIFESTYLE. OH, MY CELEBRITY FEAR. 5. **MOTHER/FATHER** JARBOE - VOCAL, BACKGROUND VOCALS; M. GIRA - ELECTRIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** HEY HEY, NOW MOTHER FATHER, HEY, HEY, NOW MY BLOODY MIND. HEY HEY, NOW KILLER FATHER, HEY, HEY, NOW MOTHER MIND: THERE'S A PLACE IN SPACE WHERE VIOLENCE AND LOVE COLLIDE INSIDE AND SOLID IS WIDE, AND HEAT IS COLD AND BIRTH IS DEATH, AND CREATION AND TIME ARE MADE FROM DESTRUCTION, FROM FUCKING DESTRUCTION, FUCKING DESTRUCTION, FUCKING DESTRUCTION, FUCKING DESTRUCTION. HEY HEY, NOW MOTHER FATHER: NOW RIDE! NOW RIDE! 6. **BLOOD PROMISE** M. GIRA - ACOUSTIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - KEYBOARDS, SOUNDS; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** WHEN SILENCE FALLS, AND LIGHT REMAINS, AND TIME IS BORN, BENEATH THE SUN, I'LL HIDE YOUR NAME, INSIDE A WORD, AND PAINT YOUR EYES, WITH FALSE PERCEPTION. AND I FEEL YOUR MIND, IN EVERYTHING, AND EVERY BREATH, DESTROYS A SOUND, AND I NEVER WILL FOLLOW, A FALSE SENSATION, AND I'LL ALWAYS BELIEVE, YOUR BLOOD PROMISE, AND EVERY BREATH, I STOLE FROM YOU, AND I NEVER WILL SEE, YOUR PERFECT BODY, AND YOU NEVER HAVE SPOKEN, AN UNCLEAR WORD, AND I'LL NEVER BETRAY, YOUR BLOOD PROMISE. 7. **MIND/BODY/LIGHT/SOUND** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - ORGAN, BACKGROUND VOCAL; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** THROW YOUR MIND AWAY, FALL INTO THE SEA. THERE'S NOTHING SOLID HERE, DISSOLVE YOUR BODY TODAY. THERE'S A SUN IN THE SKY, WE'RE IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THROW YOURSELF IN THE SEA, THERE'S NOTHING SOLID DOWN HERE. MIND/BODY/LIGHT/SOUND/MIND/BODY/LESS/SOUND/LESS/LIGHT. THIS ORDINARY NIGHT, THIS ORDINARY DAY, THEY'RE TWISTED OUT OF SHAPE, THEN THEY DISINTEGRATE. COOL WATER RUNS THROUGH THE GROUND, THE OCEAN BLENDS WITH THE AIR. THROW YOURSELF IN THE FIRE, THERE'S NOTHING SOLID AROUND HERE. MIND/BODY/LIGHT/SOUND/MIND/LESS/BODY/LESS/SOUND/LESS/LIGHT. THE WORLD WAS OVER TODAY, THE TIME IS ALREADY GON. THROW YOUR MIND IN THE SEA, ETERNITY DOESN'T LAST VERY LONG. THERE'S SOME PEOPLE ON EARTH, THEY LIVE IN SEPARATE MINDS. DISSOLVE YOUR BODY TODAY, THERE IS NO IN OR OUTSIDE. MIND/BODY/LIGHT/SOUND/MIND/LESS/BODY/LESS/SOUND/LESS/LIGHTLESS. 8. **MY BURIED CHILD** JARBOE - VOCAL, BACKGROUND VOCALS; M. GIRA - ELECTRIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; MARTIN ATKINS - HAND DRUMS. **WORDS:** MY FROZEN EMPTY VIOLENT MIND CARESSED THE HIDDEN HAIR THAT SHINES WITH LIQUID LUST I LEFT BEHIND. YOUR BODY STAINED WITH RUINED EYES, I CUT THE SKIN, CONCEALED THE CRIMES, WITH LIQUID HATE I LEFT INSIDE. AND LONELINESS IS BURIED HERE, IN ROTTING HOLES BENEATH YOUR FEAR, YOUR AGONY, YOUR TWISTED STRUGGLE, TWO BODIES SINK IN MEAT-BLOOD STRANGLED. THE SMELL OF DEATH, YOUR TORTURED GASH, ENFOLD ME IN YOUR MOTHER'S ARMS. NOW HOLD ME IN YOUR MOTHER'S ARMS. 9. **WARM** JARBOE - VOCALS; M. GIRA - ACOUSTIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR; NICKY SKOPELITIS - VARIOUS GUITARS; JOHN SARFELL - PIANO. 10. **ALCOHOL THE SEED** M. GIRA - 12 STRING ELECTRIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - ORGAN, BACKGROUND VOCALS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS, SOUNDS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** I NEED ALCOHOL, BECAUSE IT OPENS MY BLOOD. I NEED ALCOHOL, BECAUSE IT EMPTIES MY HEAD. I NEED ALCOHOL. I NEED ALCOHOL. I NEED ALCOHOL. 11. **KILLING FOR COMPANY** M. GIRA - 12 STRING ELECTRIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - ORGAN, BACKGROUND VOCALS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS, PERCUSSION, SOUNDS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ACOUSTIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF, I KNEW I'D DO IT AGAIN. BUT I COULD HEAL MYSELF, IF I COULD FEEL YOUR SKIN. AND IF I COMPREHEND THIS MOMENT, I KNOW WE'LL LIVE AGAIN. AND IF I HEAL YOUR WOUND, WE WILL MAKE LOVE AGAIN. AND NOW WE'RE SLIPPING THROUGH THIS MILLENNIUM. WE SHOULD FEEL SORRY FOR THE PEOPLE - CAN I KISS YOUR SKIN? AND THERE'S HUNGER IN THE DESERT, AND MISSILES IN THE SKY, AND EVERY SOUL IS INTERWOVEN, BEFORE THE WRONG OR RIGHT. I KNOW WE'LL LIVE AGAIN, THOUGH IT'S JUST A FEELING. I KNOW WE'LL NEVER END: I'LL KEEP YOU COMPANY. 12. **MOTHER'S MILK** JARBOE - VOCAL, BACKGROUND VOCALS; M. GIRA - ACOUSTIC GUITAR, ELECTRIC GUITAR, SOUNDS; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - DRONE GUITAR. **WORDS:** AND I'LL SLEEP IN THE SEA, AND I'LL WAIT THERE BENEATH THE MUD AND FORGOTTEN DREAMS AND DISEASE. AND WHAT IS THE SECRET I'LL DRAIN FROM YOUR SOUL, AND SWEET IS THE SUGAR I'LL DRINK FROM YOUR SKULL. AND WHERE IS THE WOUND THAT SHINES THE BLUE LIGHT, AND WHO IS THE DEAD MAN MY BODY MADE LOVE TO LAST NIGHT? 13. **WHERE DOES A BODY END?** M. GIRA - 12 STRING ELECTRIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - BACKGROUND VOCAL, ORGAN; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS, 12 STRING ACOUSTIC GUITAR; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** I SAW YOU KNEELING ON A DESERT PLATEAU, YOUR EYES WERE MELTING FROM INSIDE YOUR SKULL THE WIND WAS BURNING HOLES INTO MY SKIN: WHERE DOES A BODY END? YOUR VOICE IS DRIFTING THROUGH THE STRATOSPHERE, MY MOUTH IS DRINKING FROM YOUR POOL OF TEARS, I SAW YOUR HEARTBEAT IN THE RADIUM SCREEN: WHAT DOES A BODY MEAN? THE FUTURE'S LEAKING THROUGH A SHUT LEAD DOOR, IN THE RUINS OF A CITY UNDER THE FOREST FLOOR, YOUR NAKED BODY'S BURIED IN A VACANT FIELD: WHAT DOES YOUR BODY FEEL NOW? THE AIR IS BLACK AND HAS NO OXYGEN, THE BODIES IN THE RIVER FLOAT BENEATH THE SUN, TRANSPARENT SKIN IT SHINES A LIGHT FROM DEEP WITHIN: WHERE DOES YOUR BODY BEGIN? THE STARS ARE HIDDEN BY A MIRRORRED SKY, AND DARKNESS DISAPPEARS BEHIND REFLECTED LIGHT, PERCEPTION IS A DISTANCE IN A CLOSED-IN SPACE: HOW WILL YOUR BODY ESCAPE? THE CROWD IS FEELING YOUR INSIDE YOUR HEAD, YOUR IMAGINATION'S CANCELLED BY ITS OPPOSITE, AND EVERY POSSIBILITIES BEEN PROVED UNTRUE: NOW IS YOUR BODY YOU? 14. **TELEPATHY** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC 12 STRING GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS, VOCAL; JARBOE - KEYBOARD, BACKGROUND VOCALS; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR. **WORDS:** AND WE STEAL OUR EXPERIENCE FROM AN OBJECT THAT SUFFERS, BUT THE BRIGHTEST PAIN LEAVES A SHADOW ON NO ONE. I SAW YOU THROUGH THE WINDOW MASTURBATING TO THE VIOLENCE, AND THE BLOOD AND THE BODIES FLOATED THROUGH THE BLUE SUN, AND THE GREEN EARTH TURNS TO FLESH IN YOUR HAND, AND THE ETHER WAS BORN IN THE LUNGS OF AN ANCIENT MAN. WE HALUCINATE AT NIGHT, OUR MINDS IN THE LIGHT, BUT I CAN'T FEEL THE BODY OF THE IMAGE WHICH IS NOW PENETRATING MY SIGHT, BUT YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, AND YOU'RE REAL. ARE YOU BEAUTIFUL, ARE YOU REAL? AND MY BODY BEGINS WHERE YOUR MEMORY ENDS. YOU WERE MELTED FROM STONE, I WAS TOUCHED BY YOUR HANDS. I CAN FEEL IT WHEN PLEASURE MOVES UP YOUR SPINE. I CAN TELL WE'RE ALIVE, BECAUSE YOUR BLOOD JUST BLENDED WITH MINE. AND THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN NEVER SACRIFICED A SENSATION AS PURE AS THE CUT OF THIS KNIFE. AND THE WISDOM CONTAINED IN THE TELEPATHY OF FEAR SOLIDIFIED OUR SUFFERING INTO THE DRONING SOUND I STILL HEAR. BUT YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, AND YOU'RE REAL. ARE YOU BEAUTIFUL, ARE YOU REAL? 15. **THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR** M. GIRA - ELECTRIC GUITAR, VOCAL, SOUNDS; JARBOE - KEYBOARDS, BACKGROUND VOCAL; BILL RIEFLIN - DRUMS, SNARE, LOOPS; ALGIS KIZYS - BASS GUITAR; NORMAN WESTBERG - ELECTRIC GUITAR; CLINTON STEELE - ELECTRIC GUITAR; TED PARSONS - DRUMS. **WORDS:** ONE SECOND BURNS FOR A BILLION YEARS. AND TIME IS RELATIVE, AND LIGHT IS PHYSICAL. WE FEEL YOUR BODY, WE FEEL YOUR FEELINGS. WE SEE THE EYE OF GOD SHINE THROUGH THE CITADEL. AND SPACE IS EMPTY BEHIND THE UNIVERSE. THE PAST AND FUTURE WERE SIMULTANEOUS. INSIDE YOUR BODY WE FEEL YOUR EMPTINESS. THE LIGHT WE BREATHE IN IS YOUR UNCONSCIOUSNESS. AND YOUR BODY DISAPPEARS, BURNING BACKWARDS THROUGH THE YEARS. AND IN YOUR HANDS TIME WAS MADE. AND THROUGH BREATHING, YOU'LL ERASE IT. BUT WE CAN SEE FOREVER, BEFORE LOVE AND HATE. AND WE WILL FALL RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL OF THE PLACE WHERE WE WERE MADE - RIGHT INTO THE OPEN MOUTH OF THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR. 16. **OUT** JARBOE - VOCAL, BACKGROUND VOCAL; LARRY SEVEN - DOUBLE BASS; M. GIRA - SOUNDS.

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THESE RECORDINGS PRODUCED BY M. GIRA FOR YOUNG GOD PRODUCTIONS



FOLLOWING IS A BIOGRAPHY OF SWANS TOLD IN SEQUENTIALLY ARRANGED SELECTED PRESS QUOTES, FROM THE YEARS 1982-1992. (The last album was released in 1992.)

- 1982 → Simply put, this is some of the most powerful music I have ever heard. There's no coming up for air, absolutely no exit. - EAST VILLAGE EYE 1982
- 1983 → Forget the paradox of a band playing brutally aggressive music while taking their name from the most graceful of creatures. At CBGB recently, SWANS roared out a set of muscular tell-tale heartthuds which had the audience stupefied in spine-straight positions. Call it Anglo-Saxon anxiety at the farthest outpost of the r'n'r beat. You can't dance to it, but boy, can you throb. - VILLAGE VOICE 1983
- A crashing, whomping, searing, fierce THING. This is a terrific live band. Gira, barefoot, muscles rippling, hangs off the mic like an angry Christ anchoring the hurricane of noise swirling around him. Their masochisms and violent sensibility can border on the ridiculous, but it's all pretty much in keeping with this striking and creative band. - THE NEW YORK ROCKER 1983
- 1984 → SWANS' "COP" makes PIL sound like Buck's Fizz. We're talking heeeeeeavy. We're talking lead weights at the bottom of the Thames. The NYC quartet are already becoming legends. They flaunt rock'n'roll religions with the cynical mirth of antagonistic exorcists. People in the Sounds office hide under their desk when this record hits the turntable. - SOUNDS 1984
- Their plunging into the depths of power and degradation is universal enough, but there's a black intensity to their sound. There is a sound of the outer limits of violence turned inwards, to create an implosion that is a release, of sorts. - NME 1984
- Even slower and more crushing in the effect of its white-noise guitar, disturbing drum patterns and mesmeric tape loops. Likewise the subject matter - jobs, power, punishment, the police - is grotesquely inflated and then burst. It's the pus, blood, and shit of everyday life taken to the furthest extremes artistic license affords. Yet like all extremes, honesty is at its core. - SOUNDS 1984
- This bonecrushing sound, played in a language of ugly bass frequencies and drum parts of iron purpose, takes rock's force further than it's ever been pile-driven before. - NME 1984
- 1985 → Their message is that power of any kind ultimately brutalizes and dehumanizes those who wield it as well as those who submit to it. For some listeners, this one included, SWANS provide a bracing jolt that no other music can deliver. - THE NEW YORK TIMES 1985
- No light is admitted. It grinds on harder and harder, every dribble of moisture wrung out. The rock stops here. - NME SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1985
- It's hard to imagine a less companionable record. The brutal guitars, cruel drums, relentless intimations of collapse are all too detailed, too insistently monolithic to be called simple noise. So what do you call it? Call it SWANS. - THE BOSTON PHOENIX 1985
- Expertly produced, the new SWANS 12" is stimulating, thought provoking, and most of all, troublesome. It leaves you hoping you'll never have to meet them in the flesh. - SOUNDS SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1985
- 1986 → A deeply repulsive form of audio pornography. - MELODY MAKER 1986
- People pay to watch M. Gira rant and slaver warm yellow strings of spittle onto his naked torso. Pay money. - BOSTON SWEET POTATO 1986
- Having existed on the fringe of the NY underground for five years, the SWANS are as much performance as they are sound machine. Playing music as slow as a slug crawling down a slimy wall, the SWANS are about as much fun as watching gangrene set in. But fun isn't exactly what SWANS are all about. Their music of cruelty is filled with silences as studied and meaningful as Japanese Noh theater, and their concentration, tension, and hypnotic repetition and haunting intensity redefine white noise: in the SWANS world it's black noise for gray matter, music that is genuinely physical and visceral, a ritual of pain that leaves one drained. - THE LOS ANGELES TIMES 1986



Oh...My...this isn't seduction, this is rape. Purveyors of the most physically intense music I have ever heard live, SWANS are an aural illusion of contrasts which simply shouldn't work. One of the all time loudest bands, their silences are perfect, and the slowest rock ever performed leaves on hyped-up to terminal speed freak levels. Quite extraordinary... So why did I, for one, walk out of the club, erection in hand, and no immediate home for it? The aphrodisiac lies somewhere in SWANS' chemistry of sheer brutal volume and crushing rhythm. And all one can do is stand agog and sway. - SOUNDS 1986

SWANS records are undeniably cathartic, and their live shows are even more so: when Gira is on his knees, writhing under white light, bellowing into his microphone that just moments ago he shoved down the back of his throat, there is something intense, hysterical, and kind of moving. - THE BOB 1986

This is pure Love. Something like pure War... the grind or the screw for the SWANS is the arena where brutality and humiliation can be fantasized, perverted or simply fucked into oblivion. Pure, raw, energy, moulding a new flesh around exposed nerves. - NME 1986

It's not real pretty, but it's sure as shit bigger than you. - SPIN 1986

The repetitiveness of their slow rhythms is some of the most effective music I have ever heard, even if it does become eventually intolerable. - NME SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1986

This was some serious shit, and made the likes of Motorhead seem like pansies in comparison. Not 'cause it was extreme, but because it was so precisely drilled out. Jarboe's Mirage (sampler) keyboard chords were enough to shatter walls, yet they didn't crackle up into a mayhem mess. Same for the more standard instrumentation, and most amazing of all, Gira's vocals stood right there on top, crystal clear, which seemed almost illegal or something. It might take me three years to fully come to grips with this one, really. - FORCED EXPOSURE 1986, LIVE REVIEW

1987 →

Time and time again, SWANS plunge purposefully into dense, dank, hypnotic pools of heated passion and frightful power. Once you cut through the squeamishness that this ensemble seems to engender in even the most hale-hearted, what SWANS are about is powerfully stated sound, powerful feeling, and power itself... If you can't make this music part of your life, then you ain't living. - SPIN 1987

And it's ugly, and it's difficult, and it's long and sometimes wearying, and peculiarly beautiful, and utterly essential. - NME 1987

A tremendously exciting maturation for one of America's most powerful musical forces. - REFLEX MAGAZINE 1987

A total and utter must. Children of God is one of the releases of the year, if not the latter part of the decade. A monster-piece. Obtain it at once. - ROCKPOOL 1987

On the opening cut of Holy Money, A Hanging, lifeless voices chant in harmony, raising specters of a slave gang in hell as vicious drumbeats and gongs sound like some monstrous taskmaster. Over it all lead singer M. Gira, singing so low and slowly he sounds like he's on the wrong speed, delivers such lyrics as "Dear God in heaven... I'll hang for you"... Few bands rival the SWANS when it comes to black humor... then again, some days you just have to get it out of your system. - PEOPLE MAGAZINE 1987

Nobody, I mean nobody, writes lyrics like M. Gira. Almost always they are blunt statements written in a brutally frank and unadorned style. They delve into feelings and yearnings we all have but which we normally hide because they make us too queasy to acknowledge. They deal with the degrading aspects of power, domination, and submission and the horror of simply BEING. The words may look banal on paper, but when Gira sings them with a voice that could scare the holy excrement out of God, they become infernally powerful... He rarely leaves his NYC apartment, and says the worst thing about the city is that it "contains a large amount of people". - CREEM 1987



Like a sledgehammer to your solar plexus...Hell,you can even frug to this,if it doesn't kill you first. - SPIN 1987

1988

Faced with such a maelstrom of sound - never unregulated noise - the listener has few options.Dancing is impossible.Watching is mandatory as Michael,in varying states of undress,somersaults or shoves his bare buttocks into the front row - faces who lap up the absurdity of the spectacle.Alternately,one can stand rooted to the spot and be sucked into the communal exorcism SWANS now offer.A Church of the New Mind,with Gira singing like a hellfire preacher drinking gasoline and spitting brimstone,SWANS have placed rock and roll on the alter and sacrificed it to give birth to a unique musical vision and sensualist empire.Get down on your knees and pray with them.Immense. - NME LIVE REVIEW 1988

Children of God works.As austere and solemn as a Bresson film,it's almost as potent.After showing us empty sex,a drowned lover,and a man holding a child while threatening to kill it while screaming "This is my only regret:that I ever was born",SWANS take us to heaven,which is just another word for death. - THE VILLAGE VOICE 1988

SWANS keep getting better.They might even surpass previous Godhead efforts. - ROCKPOOL 1988

A tremendous record...The group has grown several new colors on its tonal pallet and evince subtlety without giving up the erg of raw,rank,power...Once again the SWANS seem eager to wrap up another phase and blow open whole new doors of exploration...A couple of years ago I was dreading the potentially noxious results of each successive release - now I simply can't wait. FORCED EXPOSURE - 1988

Intensity is perhaps an overused word in critics' circles,but there's no avoiding the term when it comes to SWANS.This is one intense group.They're alot more,too - sacriligious,visceral,hypnotic,disturbing,entrancing,and in a sense, repellent.That is,their worldview offers precious little hope.The fact that all these things come into play,though,makes you appreciate the SWANS experience.They play rock'n'roll that's out on the ledge. - BOSTON GLOBE 1988

SWANS,the band Michael Gira has led since 1982,has entered its third phase.The early SWANS played fast,angular,post-punk;then the group shifted to slow lurching drones topped with discordant noise and lyrics about brutal conjunctions of sex and power,dominance and submission.The latest SWANS lineup kept the old power,but the guitar noise and dissonance were now gone - replaced by simple repeated chords and riffs,and there were gentle,folkish tunes featuring the band's new female singer Jarboe.While blood and death still show up in the SWANS lyrics,so does a new symbol of power:God. - THE NEW YORK TIMES,LIVE REVIEW 1988

Pretty,yes.Lightweight,no.Underlying all this are heavy omnipresent currents of power - more power than most bands will generate in a lifetime. - OPTION MAGAZINE 1988

1989

SWANS manage to sound as astonishing "soft" as they did "abrasive"...a fabulous and fantastic single that invites you to dream. - NME SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1989

Dangerous and priceless,The Burning World flames from a tinder of crashing hearts,lost minds,and unexpected mercy...The inevitable tides of rhythm,the hypnotic drone of the voice,leave you with the marvelous and sick sensation that you are staring fascinated at a beautiful slice in your own wrist...only by passing through so many frames of darkness could SWANS approach pure light. - SPIN 1989

As befits a man who named his band after a shape of Zeus,Gira sees his dark world in sweepingly poetic terms,by turns mythic,Biblical,and Shakespearean.Gira's intensity is more believable in his live glowering presence - but at its best The Burning World approaches a haunting clarity equal to the band's epic vision. - THE WASHINGTON POST 1989



Whereas once SWANS were merciless in their aggression, beating the body with the loudest slabs of squall extant, the band - which has been revamped - are now wholly mesmeric... Bare footed and bathed in sweat, Michael Gira swaps vocals with Jarboe, the latter a kaleidoscope of loose silks, and it's swiftly clear that confidence has replaced the old arrogance... They have played themselves out of the corner of noise-works and into a terrain of subtle moodswings. Exit an iron fist in the face, enter a caress. The audience love SWANS. Unbelievable. - NME LIVE REVIEW OF READING FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE 1989

The Burning World is disarming in its depth and trance-like musical power, a startlingly honest record. - Stereo Review 1989

Their ticket out of the noise jungle they themselves created... Genuinely new and exciting. - SOUNDS SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1989

1991 →

In a sense White Light From The Mouth Of Infinity is easy listening, and that's because it's such a pleasure to get lost in its bruised but blissful panorama. Intensity like a shower of colors all raining in your face... Infinity beckons. ... It's fucking magnificent and anyone who chooses to mock the ambition and/or deny the result is clearly possessed of sensibilities more commonly associated with single-celled pond life. - MELODY MAKER 1991

Too sedate and even pretty for their early-noise-and-bludgeon fans, and too stately and bleak for pop fans, SWANS have become one of the most misunderstood bands still working... SWANS' secret weapon is Jarboe, whose presence has brought the group a marked melodic pull that has made the music satisfying. - OPTION 1991

The SWANS have never flown to the beat of other drummers. What makes them truly unique is their use of anger or ego couched in lullaby melodies and drifting revels. There is a sense of decay on this record that surpasses all previous efforts, a feeling that something is not quite right in the world where bliss gives ground to demons, where the sublime becomes the horrific, where earth and death meet in pitched combat. - ROCKPOOL 1991

Making maybe the most powerful music of any grim-reaper dirge-rock outfit in this city or any other, gloomy and noisy in its early years, SWANS have evolved by stripping it down to an intensely focused funereal mantra, anthemic and operatic, the logical successor to other great bands like the Velvets and Television. Records like Children of God, The Burning World, and White Light From The Mouth Of Infinity contain some of the most fiercely bleak rock elegies anyone ever opened a vein to. When the apocalypse comes, it'll most likely come to NYC first, like everything else, and SWANS will be here playing the theme music. NY PRESS, BEST NYC BAND 1991

It's no coincidence that SWANS made big noise throughout the '80s, their huge venomous slabs of muscle-music chronicling the Greed, Filth, Holy Money that made the Burning World run. The SWANS didn't roll over and play pop, take the money and fly, or allow their all-too-brief flirt with the Big Boys to sour them into oblivion, and it's a testament to the strength and steadfastness of the unit, and most particularly, to the sound-merchant behind it all. - REFLEX 1991

"White Light..." doesn't make any concessions to appeal to previous noise days. There is that concern for song structure as well as sound structure. There is an emphasis on emotion that straddles the line between aching and saccharine, fear and bombast, complacency versus insecurity. "White Light" features the kind of warmth reserved for embracing the thing that is most dangerous to the individual. Long hard stares just don't come any more alluring. - ALTERNATIVE PRESS 1991

Expansion of an originally raw hard rock sound is something that's worked to the real benefit of such bands as Sonic Youth and Social Distortion. Like them, the SWANS are proving that moving forward doesn't always mean surrendering your individuality and purpose. - CREEM 1991

It's still Michael Gira's obsessive show, as his search for heaven and hell - in both mind and body - continues on its fascinating, sometimes harrowing way. - LOS ANGELES TIMES 1991



1992 →

Here's Michael Gira and Jarboe totally at ease with melodic consonance at last. SWANS now play a very emotion-laden, symphonically thick and sacredotally toned stuff. It's honestly majestic and very moving indeed. - YOUR FLESH 1991

It's hard to remain objective when faced with the beautiful noise of paradise burning, worlds collapsing, memory failing, numbness setting in... White Light From The Mouth Of Infinity is simply the most accomplished, melodic, and aesthetically pleasing collection of songs this NYC-spawned arthouse hardcore troupe have yet produced. - NME 1991

They chime, they drone, they dazzle, they daze. And the force of their depth-charge bass lines makes you think dinosaurs might still be walking the earth. ... They set their controls for the heart of the sun... Grace mixing with danger, a heady swirl that is also physically intense, an abstruse sense of physical cleansing and catharsis. - BOSTON GLOBE LIVE REVIEW 1992

For once Gira doesn't create a thing of beauty in order to destroy it. He just allows the thing to blossom and fills it with joy, a rare and splendid pleasure. Love of Life is all-embracing, a triumph of perseverance and ingenuity. - MELODY MAKER SINGLE OF THE WEEK 1992

SWANS have never been more powerful or more beautiful. Agreed, they don't deliver the voyeuristic thrill they once did when Gira thought he was Christ (or at least gave us a convincing impression he was thinking so) and was obsessed with themes of domination and abject submission. But even without the apparent extremism he is as compelling as ever, probably more so... There's something larger than life, louder than love, about SWANS. And when Gira comes out alone to sing Failure you want to scream out "You're not a failure, you're Goddamned Prometheus!", or something. - MELODY MAKER LIVE REVIEW 1992

Love of Life is the first SWANS album to resolve the band's urge for a larger audience with its knack for creating music that loves getting on peoples' nerves... SWANS will trounce their demons and forever dance in a flickering spot of neon light. - SPIN 1992

Love of Life, a highly disciplined new work from the SWANS, is stunning, a deep and resounding soundscape which cannot be ignored. - THE FIFTH PATH 1992

This is SWANS best album, tightly woven with strands that are both seductive and disturbing. Given its emotional clout, the noise terrorism tactics of yore seem clumsy by comparison. - SELECT 1992

The SWANS have followed up last years' White Light with an equally disturbing, haunting, revealed glimpse into the post-modern world of society gone mad, emotions entombed, and hope and faith, elevated to new, precarious levels. A dark gem. - ROCKPOOL 1992

Pounding drums, crashing cadences, and slowly shifting melodic patterns are lusciously orchestrated into hymns of despair, loss, love, and other eternal questions that Gira will probably never come close to answering but few others choose to ponder with such hard-headed dedication... Mad Michael's on our side at last. - NME 1992

Forging through a decade of change and discoveries, SWANS converge upon a crossroads of tangible sensations and mystic dreams. Michael Gira and Jarboe, along with old and new collaborators, create layer upon layer of depth, yet free themselves from the weight of previous releases, pulling you into bliss among the rocks. - CMJ 1992

The SWANS have been around for ten years - a lifetime in the world of "Alternative" music - and in that time they have kept several giant leaps ahead of others, and themselves, for that matter, and have avoided stagnation and sameness. Step One: Relax. Step Two: Listen to Love of Life all the way through at least twice. Step Three: Be amazed. - THE ROCKET 1992

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THE GREAT ANNIHILATOR, 1995, IS THE FIRST SWANS STUDIO ALBUM SINCE 1992

