

## THE STAPLE SINGERS BEST OF THE VEEJAY YEARS

VEE JAY LP

Who'da thunk that a nuclear-soul diving flaming kamikaze Nuclear Warhead Bomb would have been constructed via the Sunday Morning shadows of Chicago via 1948 from "Pops" Roebuck and his three children???? Man, where has this group been in my insane ear-life? Not until recently I saw a video of this rabidly stripped down proto-northern urban gospel troupe completely FREEZING the air with a mind-deforming combo of nothing but a moaning quiet trebly guitar pulled slowly into misery from a 2 watt suitcase amp and four sirens spreading out the most intimate heavy soul music I've heard, EVER. Whew this is not mellow. The three daughter voices are so eerie, haunting, but forward and otherworldly that it makes perfect sense that only a crippled quiet moaning guitar string can accompany it. Now I know why all the "heerrriiooon" Houston gospel singles Aaron Coyes flexed on during smoky frozen afternoon 45 spins were influenced by. Even when there is a spackling of dry, unmoving pitter-patter percussion it's still THOSE voices and THAT guitar. If I was in this family band, I would do nothing else but play this gorgeous soul-weight music every second of the day, all day, to anyone or anywhere, for years. Been awhile since something has moved me so much like this at least five hours after the MANTAS-hellfire demo smoke has smoldered down to an ember glow. After you hear "Will The Circle Remain Unbroken" you will pitch your Elevators records to the next stoned dupe wanting to lap em up. "I'm Coming Home" parts one and two will bulldoze over any idea in your head and demand so much attention that jamming it on a lonely drive home on a rainy mid-February cold night after a free screening of Walking Dead will make you be barely able to turn the wheel and thus you will end up in a shadowy ditch. Oddly the early stuff isn't really around anymore, but the later "I'll Take You There" 70's material is as common as a cheap date and has nada of the

THE ORIGINAL "VEE-JAY" RECORD COMPANY / CHICAGO 1953-1966 / PREMIUM SOUND / BLUES / R&B / GOSPEL / SOUL / JAZZ

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magic of the ghost-world early material. I got kinda bummed - taken aback by the glow of the STAPLES when on a heavy Saturday errands run with the entire family (two ladies + mugger) Tovs asked me to "Turn down NPR Radio Special on the Black Religious Experience," but after a handful of 2AM post- Wolf Dice/Practice drives home on the lonely 696 with "I'll Be Coming Home" on repeat, the mystique hasn't lessened. Has there been a book about this unit? I can only imagine how nut-crunch-ingly intense the early gigs were. That damn guitar: it is as equally wit-frighteningly perfect and craggly crawling as fellow Chicagoan Hubert Sumlin - just the difference being between a wasted Saturday 4:30AM and an overtly sober Sunday 7:45AM. Maybe God or Satan is your bag, but "Vee Jay" is just as tough as "Seasons Into The Abyss," maybe even more punk in its forward manner and its dry-magic. One of those killer groups that 20% of your crew will be into. Up the Haunted Xian 'Punx!!

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**MANTAS**  
**DEATH BY METAL**  
RELAPSE LP

"Mantas Want You to Die!" exclaims the death-zombie evil creature from the old advert inside. HELL YEAH they do. Seeing how this demo beast is a hand full of years before the mighty Repulsion I'd say that this rancid rotting lo-fi flesh shredder is just GROUND ZERO for US death metal. The evil gnarled twisted kind that just went on and on inside the genius mind of Chuck "Evil Chuck" Schuldiner with the legacy of DEATH. Makes perfect sense in the lineage as a pre-Scream Bloody Gore LP with a wild insane basement attack from a Florida trio of youths whose brains are just boiling with horrible thoughts and even worse audio traumas. I would love nothing more than to drive by the house while this tornado was unleashed on the neighborhood. AND sounds like they rehearsed... ALOT. Complexity and music mangle -cum-zombie virtuosity was always the mutant operandi with Chuck, and this crude demo classic is just a pure RAGER. Recorded on a boom box with a blanket over the condenser microphone for god-knows what reason but the effect is a brutal, twisted, aggressive attack supreme. Amazing liners by members Rick Rozz & Keerannnger Ian Christine shed a gray-toned scale of the events around the demo. I remember the day well: deep into a three day Texas trip with the Aids Wolf crew blasting Death Metal classics in the big ol clanky white van at top volume, then stopping at a raw METAL store outside of Austin and calling the Conn Man to ask what DEATH record I should grip and within two seconds I had "Scream Bloody Gore" enter into my world-couldn't actually listen to it for a week, but me, Yannick, ChLoe, and this editor Alex would just stare at it and soak in the unheard brilliance. MANTAS: by no means legendary as the mentioned SBG but as a card carrying demo head this is AMAZING and a completely crucial puzzle piece to underground extreme metal much less as one of the best US bands ever to exist. All Death albums were like the The Velvet Underground: each one is different and fits together perfectly historically and MANTAS is no different. If you are climbing the walls inside your mental prison and watching DAWN OF THE DEAD uncut for the 100000% time then you rule and you should rule with MANTAS. "Enter if you DARE!!"

