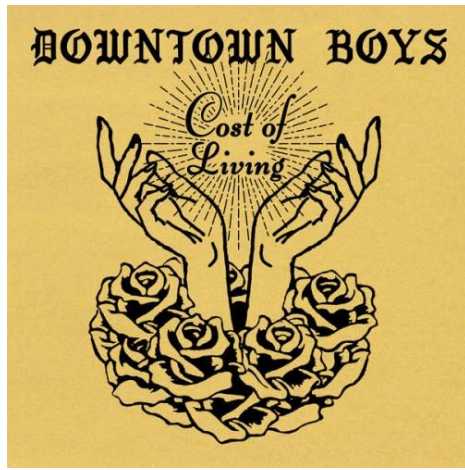


Spotlight



As in most endeavours, the women of punk rock have not gotten the respect they deserve. The Ramones, the Sex Pistols, and the Clash are often cited as punk's holy trinity and yet at least equally as great bands such as the X-Ray Spex have faded from the spotlight. It would be hard and wrong not to chalk some of this dismissal up to sexism.

Like X-Ray Spex, Downtown Boys are fronted by a woman: Victoria Ruiz. But that's not the only similarity. Ruiz's voice is filled with all the snarl and sarcasm of the Spex's Poly Styrene, and Joey La Neve DeFrancesco's saxophone is every bit as screechy and abrasive as Lora

Logic's.

Heaven knows that women still have much to be angry about in 2017 and on *Cost of Living*, Downtown Boys deliver. It's not just sexism, but homophobia, commercialism, classism, racism, and fascism as well. Sometimes these targets are obvious, sometimes a bit more obscure. Production-wise, the album is refined just enough to be listenable but still captures that do-it-yourself aesthetic that is at the heart of true punk.

No modern punk band, especially those fronted by men, are doing the genre justice like the Downtown Boys. *Cost of Living* is an instant classic and one of the best albums of 2017.

John Mutford, Library Manager

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