

## **Pick It Up, Pig Boy**

### **The Stuff**

#### **Review by Erik Hage**

Let's get this out of the way up front: the members of Swedish garage rockers the Stuff conceal their identities behind giant rubber rat heads. (They claim to have met in the European sewer system.) Beyond that, however, the Stuff play a brand of drop-dead cool, hooky garage rock/punk that belies their whimsical attitude toward identity. You can hear a lot of *Fun House*-era [Stooges](#) here, but the Stuff ply their craft with a little more laid-back insouciance than those godfathers of the genre; the lead singer/bassist (listed simply as "the rat in the leather jacket") often drops epithets like he's too cool to care, more [Damon Albarn](#) than [Iggy Pop](#). It's an effect that works well when pinned up against the fat, tuneful guitar-fuzz of "the rat in the orange T-shirt." The rats also toss a stew of other influences into their primitive garage rock blend. "Pl-pl-Please" -- a breakout single, if there is one -- finds the band borrowing liberally (and successfully) from [T. Rex](#), while "Your Libido" has a twangy, minimal guitar figure reminiscent of early [Devo](#). "Knock Knock" is probably the most infectious tune of the bunch, a perfect example of the band's blend of willful, brutal simplicity and sharply melodic smarts.

**Allmusic.com**

★★★★☆

**There's a Swedish band called The Stuff** who may or may not also be Monty Python fans. Remember that skit called "The Mouse Problem," where a bunch of young British lads started dressing up as mice, and sneaking into the cheese? According to the official "bio" for The Stuff, the four band members are actually rats who grew up in "the vast sewer system connecting Europe's major cities." They're wearing rat heads in every photo on their debut album *Pick It Up, Pig Boy* (Ill Wind Records), and even more amusingly, the press release lists the musicians as "a rat, guitar and lead vocals; another rat, guitar and vocals; a third rat, bass; a final rat, drums." Now certainly there are other groups in the world who prefer to hide their real identity (notably The Residents). But this is a pretty unique twist, especially since The Stuff appear intent on maintaining the conceit in both marketing and performance. If they sucked, it wouldn't be anything but a lark. However, these guys are damn good.

*Pick It Up* is a raw but viscerally satisfying collection that may not be as dirty as the sewers, but it certainly has its own dark, grungy life. You'll hear echoes of the Stooges, T Rex and more recent bands like Black Rebel Motorcycle Club within the grooves, but The Stuff have that Swedish tendency of making you think they invented their own brand of rock & roll. "Your Libido" has a kick-ass rhythm and an infectious "Give it up!" chorus that prove irresistible, and the kind of blazing guitar riffs that drive songs like "Say Hello to Mary" and "Knock Knock" are the very essence of Rock 101. "Pl-pl-please" is an effortlessly catchy single that it's pointless to resist; it joins the list of pop classics that employ stuttering as a stylistic element (come to think of it, both BTO and The Who could be considered additional influences here). "Here Come The Judge" and "Say Goodbye" with its clattering percussion are also great goofy rock songs.

There is little that's original about The Stuff, but somehow their sound and presentation induce smiles and spontaneous giggles. Whether or not "rodent rock" becomes a hot new trend, the grimy, gritty sound showcased on *Pick It Up, Pig Boy* definitely has teeth.

**Rating: 7.**

**OM: 2;**

**Presentation: 3.**

**Order from [www.illwindrecords.com](http://www.illwindrecords.com)**

Kevin Renick

**Playback St Louis**

**Rating 8/10**

**Stuff, The**

**Pick it up, Pig Boy**

**CD | Ill Wind Records**

The question is if half the attraction stems from the difficulty in obtaining solid facts about this band. There's nothing about The Stuff on their record company's website and definitely no information in the press release. Disinformation, rather. The band is said to be possibly four nameless rats, all born and raised in the sewers of Europe. That the band has released at least two singles in 2004, 'Say hello to Mary' and 'Pl-pl-please' (also on the album) seems true. That they dwell somewhere in the Stockholm area is probably true as well.

Web searches for the producer George Bowland yield no conclusive results. Possibly another of the band's well planted myths.

But never mind. The fact is that the band's first album "Pick it Up, Pig Boy" is the most fun I've heard in a very long time. Jesus And The Mary Chain meet Caesar's Palace, kneaded together with deafening guitars. The ears beg for mercy.

They do twelve songs in 33 minutes, giving an average of barely three exemplary minutes per song. Impatience reigns supreme and the tempo gives no opportunity to catch your breath. Even though there are tracks

dangerously close to 'old fart' rock 'n' roll, the singer, whoever he might be, always carries through the weaker parts.

Just as you think you're on to their references they turn a corner and the song ends up somewhere else completely. Keep your eyes peeled for this band's live gigs. If they're half as intense as this album they'll help us survive the Swedish winter.

Åsa Lindblom

**metica.se (Sweden)**

### **The Stuff**

#### **Pick It Up, Pig Boy**

This album is really ballsy from start to finish, after every track I was expecting a quick decline from strong song writing to mundane rubbish... a band can't possibly have a full album of fresh individualism... How wrong I was, there's not even one track remotely close to being a 'skipper'.

It's a strong album; well produced and musical talent is smacking you in the face. It's a touch of Mod, packed to the hilt with the old raw power of the sixties Garage sounds with a twist of seventies glam (without the feather boa, sparkle and glitter) and has the heaviness of Eighties Rock and the Hooks of Nineties Indie.

Punky hard-hitting tracks like 'Pretty Please', 'Your Libido' and 'Say Goodbye'. The strut... strut... strut of The Rolling Stones, Buckcherry style bluesy rock in 'Say Hello to Mary' and 'Look at her Go'. Influences sound too many to mention... The Faces, Mott the Hoople, even a bit of Bowie, Lou Reed and T-Rex, in 'Here comes the Judge' and 'pl-pl-please', then contrasting quickly away to a more industrial grungy feel in last track 'Bad Day at Blood Beach'.

The vocals are dark, nasally and to the point, very reminiscent of Roxx Gang vocalist Kevin Steele with a little more subtlety, but don't let this put you off if 80's Glam vocalist's style isn't your thang. I'd advise anybody who likes well played diverse Rock n' Roll with shit-hot vocals to go out and buy this album, you'll be Intrigued, street urchins in rat masks??!!?? Nothing is given away by the sleeve, no clues of what this album contains, which is brilliant, no pigeon holing... Just how I Like it!!!

by Mekanydoll

**Glitzine.net (UK)**

### **The Stuff**

#### **Pick it Up, Pig Boy**

**Label: Ill Wind**

**Rating: 4/5**

Four rats who crept up from the sewers to play rock 'n' roll. That's how the unbelievably cool The Stuff present themselves. This gimmick is hardly necessary as these blokes' debut album can hold its own – and then some. Scorching, venomous rock, flirting with everything from Johnny Thunders and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club to early Rolling Stones. beyond compare. And to top it off, one of the best looking album covers I've ever seen with a title that doesn't whisper but screams attitude. We need bands like The Stuff. The air just gets so much easier to breathe after spending some time with "Pick it up, pig boy".

Mikael Sörling

**Helsingborgs Dagblad (Sweden)**

### **The Stuff**

#### **Pick It Up, Pig Boy**

**Garage Rock**

These are four musicians of unknown identity (they claim they met in the huge sewer network of Europe) with a strong tendency towards sarcasm; directed at themselves, as well as at whoever sees them (they wear rat masks on the cover) or hears them. Looking for influences on this record by the rats who call out to pig boys, we can note Stooges but also Blur - influences which define the style of The Stuff quite well. Often, the road to success and recognition passes from the depreciation of the musician as well as the listener. To which degree this is premeditated is a question which the musicians-rats could do well by answering. Admittedly, although they may look repulsive, they sound spirited, sarcastic, inspired, talented and extremely funny. What will happen when they turn human remains to be seen.

(7)

Stathis Aspiotis

**Rock + Roll (Greece)**

### **THE STUFF :: Pick It Up, Pig Boy**

A band with masks in the style of big rats heads... now either these guys are butt ugly or maybe they are using it to give that 'mystery' element and they have some serious talent to hide. From the outset I can tell that this is one of those CD's that is gonna be like trying to push a cube into a round hole, the whole thing is just unique, I can't make up my mind if that is a good or a bad 'unique'. With distorted vocals that flow endlessly into themselves and

are sung with an uncanny ease whilst being backed up with some of the craziest synth, keyboard and percussion sounds that I've heard in a long time. The whole thing is addictive, you don't know what it is that you like, the screaming distorted guitars, crashing drums or just the plain old way in that you can't make head nor tail of it, it's just playing away and dragging you in closer and closer, The Stuff have definitely got the 'Stuff' to make for a promising career but I just can't put my finger on what their 'Stuff' actually is...

**Leatherboyz.net (Italy)**

### **The Stuff - Pick It Up, Pig Boy CD (Ill Wind Records)**

I realize that it's hard to attract attention in the world of music with millions of crap bands to compete with and a lame press who promote so much mediocre bullshit that it leaves little room for all the good stuff. I realize that, but it's over the line when 4 talented rock musicians with rare ability to write highly listenable songs that borderline between pop and garage rock and have loads of potential claim to actually be rats and wear rat masks that make them look like morons..... come on! Other than that it's a great album with huge commercial potential. So skip the masks ratboy and play some rock 'n' roll!

<http://www.illwindrecords.com>

If You Dig: Jesus And Mary Chain if they were in a happy mood, Swedish pop with distortion



Don K

**Lowcut.dk (Denmark)**

### **THE STUFF**

#### **pick it up, pig boy**

'pick it up, pig boy' is the debut album from sweden's the stuff. it's heavy, groovy, stylish, brutal and fun. it's an intricate mix of almost every conceivable style of rock 'n' roll from rhythm 'n' blues and rockabilly to punk, new wave and beyond. the stuff do their own thing with confidence and intensity and it's a great look into the undiscovered underbelly of stockholm's rock n roll movement

**Rough Trade Shops (UK)**

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### **The Stuff- Pl-pl-please/Bad Day at blood Beach**

And what a shake-up for Swedish music!

I honestly didn't know what to expect from this 2tx single, after all... if you're confronted by four blokes wearing rats heads, you'd wonder what the hell you'd let yourself in for, and as Pelle Gustavsson of P3 (Swedish National Radio) said, I really do agree, they are "dredged straight from the sewers".

With a stringent of sounds and influences flying from all corners, single Pl-Pl-Please can do nothing other than Pl-Pl-Please and alongside track 'Bad Day At Blood Beach' it makes for one seriously, well thought out, fucked up single, and I'm begging for more!

In 2 tiny little tracks, it manages to combine the grooving licks n' hips of 70's and 80's glam, straddled by those pungent stings of mechanical resonance we've come to expect from bands such as Alice In Chains and Brides of Destruction and, when you start to think about it... rats are one of those creatures that have spanned from times bygone and multiply by the 1000's every single day; no matter what, they're here to stay, so accept it... because you never know... this could be the next big disease!

Both tracks can be downloaded from [ILLWIND RECORDS](#)

by Spice D. Warlock

**Glitzine.net (UK)**

### **THE STUFF – Pl-Pl-Please mCd (IllWind)**

Our old friends are coming on. With frighteningly good songwriting and their classic sledgehammer approach The Stuff whack out a single that could change their lives. Pl-Pl-Please is a dead cert, an invention coming from Bolan at his most glamorous, immersed in the Libertines and the Hives; it's unbelievably catchy. Bad Day At Blood Beach may not have the same potential but pounds along nicely with muscle and some unexpected twists. Great stuff.

Michele Benetello

**Teenage Kicks (Italy)**

### **The Stuff, PL-PL-PLEASE**

A strange mixture of classic rock and modern noise accumulates the new single by The Stuff. In case you are wondering who these rats are, the rat in the orange t-shirt is the main guitarist. he seems to be the oldest but no one knows for sure. The rat in the leather jacket sings lead and plays the bass. he also writes most of the songs with the rat in the orange t-shirt. The rat in the cap wandered in one day and wouldn't leave (possibly because he was wanted for questioning). He occasionally plays a solo and cooks quite well. The rat in the red jacket is the

drummer. just the drummer. These rockin' rats have made new fans with their latest release and have earned the praise of loyal fans.

With the variety of sound on PL-PL-Please and Bad Day at Blood Beach, The Stuff are destined to climb the charts. Their new album, "Pick It Up, Pig Boy", is available in stores now.

**Newschannel 11, (Lubbock, TX, USA)**

#### **THE STUFF**

##### **pl-pl-please**

the stuff from sweden demand your attention and the first single 'pl-pl-please' from the album 'pick it up, pig boy' is a perfect example of their vintage rock. it's a groovy and glammed up pop nugget stealing a t-rex guitar hook and a chorus that nags at your head. the second cut 'bad day at blood beach' is like 20th century boy getting revamped by the mary chain. cd single only on ill wind records

**Rough Trade Shops (UK)**

“The music is a joyous mixture of the great lo-fi strains of music over the last thirty odd years, and it works brilliantly because The Stuff have the melody feeling to make it work”

**Hit Facts (Sweden)**

“With their riffs and hooks, brilliant vocals and at times a virtual rhythm bonanza, The Stuff create irresistible rock music with more than its share of attitude and feeling”

Tomas Fridholm

**Musikindustrin (Sweden)**

“I'm pleasantly surprised by the content of The Stuff's first album... a very successful debut.”

Peter Johansson

**Musiklandet (Sweden)**

“The Stuff follow their brilliant EP with an equally brilliant single”

Ola Karlsson,

**La Musik (Sweden)**

“A cocky witches' brew of all the cool chapters in rock history”

Niclas Sahlström

Rating 4/5

**Newz (Sweden)**

“No matter if you're into punk, rock or pop – check this record out immediately!”

David Johansson

Rating 9/10

**Deepdive Magazine**