

FRONTBUTT :: PRESS

MAKE IT FUNKY NOW

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The world of entertainment is so twisted up, cross-pollinated and incestual that it's never really much of a surprise when something that seems completely absurd on the face turns out to be genius in practice.

Take the Dark Star Orchestra, for instance. Years after Jerry Garcia died, dissolving the world's most notorious jam band, you'd think the last thing we'd need would be another Grateful Dead cover band.

Then these guys from Chicago hatch a hair-brained scheme to cover not just Dead tunes, but whole shows. It's ridiculous idea from the get-go, but somehow, it is perfect in every way. The Dark Star Orchestra is one of the few bands that get really close to the original Dead-show experience, music-wise. And when frontman Jon Kadlecik remembers lyrics that Jerry fumbled at the original shows, well..., sometimes it's almost better.

Frontbutt exploits a similarly paradoxical mystique. Rap from the '80s and '90s is a rough genre to adore. ("Ice, ice baby?"—pshaw! Open a window.) A lot of that crap was real crap—mung pasted together by un-named producers featuring mouthy bigots with jawfuls of gold and hood ornaments hanging around their necks. These jogging suit fetishists could consider themselves very lucky if their one hit was strong enough to get them anywhere near the wonder category

Frontbutt rummages through the nobody-wants-em record stacks of the lost vinyl era and resurrects a shiny new hip-hop beast, one that—by capitalizing on the comic intensity of a bunch of white dudes enthusiastically spewing the music of urban blacks—actually excels where its idiom so often repelled.

The fact that they take it super-light only helps. Frontbutt's's line-up is fully pseudonymed, with band members donning costumes and wicked hip-hop get-ups. It's like a club for dudes who just can't let classics like "Funky Cold Medina" die.

And a scene—whoa! When the Frontbutt crew socks it to you, the whole house knows, because nobody can resist a funky backbeat, three in-your-face frontmen and a too-cool groove being copped organically on guitars and drums actually doing justice to the original synthetic flavor. With Frontbutt in the house it is not uncommon to see funky fly girls and assorted party people dancing on speaker stacks and tables, ripping clothes off of bandmembers, screaming at the tops of their lungs and shaking their booties hard. A most hearty party indeed.