



All the Saints

Fire on Corridor X

(Killer Pimp)

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by [Jennifer Kelly](#)

Ear Bleeding Ecstasies

Atlanta's All the Saints may start in a shivery atmosphere of Mogwai-ish guitar, piano and drums (the brief, evocative "Shadow Shadow"), but they quickly move to obliterating churn and drone. They may name two songs after historic synth pop ("Sheffield") and post-punk ("Leeds") capitals, but they are firmly grounded in the Manchester aesthetic of guitar distortion. Yet unlike label mates—and fellow feedback aficionados—A Place to Bury Strangers, All the Saints embedded a near-metallic splendor into their fierce drones. You can hear bits of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin in their shimmering sheets of sound, alongside echoes of all the usual Northern UK suspects, Stone Roses, Joy Division and My Bloody Valentine...as well as their American followers in Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.

Fire on Corridor X is the All the Saints' first full-length album, following on a seven-song EP released. The band—guitarist Matt Lambert, bassist/singer Titus Brown and drummer Jim Crook—all grew up together in Alabama, but only formed a band a few years ago when they all met up in Atlanta. Yet for an early effort, *Fire on Corridor X* is remarkably cohesive and varied, its more pensive interludes ("Shadow, Shadow", "Hornett") leading inexorably into pounding, riff-bending onslaughts ("Sheffield", "Papering Fix"). "Leeds" is even a sort of folksy, acoustic campfire song, yet it fits without a glitch between Sabbath "Papering Fix" and the epic, slo-mo title track. The songs elide into one another, with the cut breaks often fairly arbitrary, a slow drone ending one song and introducing another. As a result, despite the variety of songs, the album has a very coherent shape and progression to it. It feels like a well-thought-out live performance, or even a long composition with movements.

A few cuts, however, stand out, the loud ones in particular. "Farmacia" is a codeine-furzed, psychedelic drift, its hazy vocals billowing over magma eruptions of distortion. With "Sheffield", the drums break loose, a tidal surge of tom rolls and cymbal clashes under the stately melody. And "Regal Regalia" slips a bit of daydream between pummeling eighth-note barrages of guitar. It's a manifesto of sorts, the band's signature blend of vocal tranquility and ear-bleeding aggression on display, the band's name incorporated into the chorus. If you had to pick only one—and that would be a shame—this is it.

Fire on Corridor X was produced by pop mainstay Ben Allen, best known for his work with Gnarlz Barkley, Animal Collective, P-Diddy, and Christina Aguilera. He is responsible, apparently, for the extreme clarity of this recording, an approach which does not exactly contradict All the Saints' storm and clangor, but rather brings all its elements into focus. You can hear the vocals perfectly, for instance, in the feedback fuzzed "Regal Regalia", despite a floor-shaking bass and guitar riff that

must be overwhelming live. The drums, too, clatter and surge with a distinctness, a legibility almost, that you can always hear and understand, but that never blots out the other parts.

And maybe that's what makes *Fire on Corridor X* such a kick, that you can hear every element of its super loud sound, that it overwhelms without blurring at the edges, that its body-shaking impact contains surprising subtlety and variety. All the Saints makes as much volume as a trio can—and that's saying something—but it's a nuanced, well-balanced firestorm. Not that it won't burn you to ashes just the same.

RATING: 

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