

FREE SHIPPING \$79+ Fashion Nova Online fashion clothing store

MUSIC

Schizo Metal

by ROBIN A. ROTHMAN
JUNE 21, 2005



Sonic equivalent of Sybil PHOTO: IAN JENNINGS

If System of a Down had existed 20 years ago, when metal was simply heavy, hair, or speed—not alt- or nü—they probably would’ve been an Alternative Tentacles band. They could’ve cheered Jello Biafra on during his *Frankenchrist* obscenity lawsuit and toured with nomeansno while the Dead Kennedys spent more time in court than in clubs. Maybe, in that world, Metallica would’ve considered replacing Cliff Burton with Les Claypool when he auditioned, instead of Jason Newsted.

As things are, Claypool gave us Primus, Newsted provided justice for all, Metallica’s talent was attached to hair length, and guitarist Daron Malakian, lead vocalist Serj Tankian, bassist Shavo Odadjian, and drummer John Dolmayan waited until 1995 to get together. They hailed from L.A., not San Fran. And given their third release, *Mezmerize*, we should be glad things happened this way. Especially since it’s only the first installment of a two-disc set. The second, *Hypnotize*, drops in November.



Meanwhile, this 11-track, 36-minute *Use Your Disillusionment I* packs a lot in. Lyrically, it’s rife with cutting social commentary. U.S. policy takes many hits—“You and me we’ll all go down in history with a sad statue of liberty and a generation that didn’t agree.” But TV banality, drug binges, and celebrity baseball games are also skewered. Mocking easy marks like pop stars backlashes on “Radio/Video”: “Hey man, look at me rockin’ out/I’m on the radio.” As are SOAD; how about that?

Musically? Well, System are the sonic equivalent of Sybil being told she can be anything when she grows up. Dark, dense, and arty? Yup. Warp-speed riffs and double kicks? Check. Moshable? Oi! Zappa-like rock opera? You betcha. Sample of Jacko’s “Beat It?” Got it. Oddly poppy interludes and something that, with a nudge, has equal opportunity to be a ska groove or Eastern European folk song? Of course. All freckled with catchy choruses and connected by the gorgeously jarring transitionlessness SOAD are known for. With all this, *Mezmerize* should be enough to keep A.D.D.-ers occupied for six months.

MORE: [DARON MALAKIAN](#) [JASON NEWSTED](#) [LES CLAYPOOL](#) [METALLICA](#) [MUSIC NEWS](#)

OBIE AWARDS Monday, May 21, 2018, Terminal 5 Tickets on Sale Now Visit [ObieAwards.com](#) for more information Co-Presented by VOICE AMERICAN THEATRE WING

MOST POPULAR

BEST OF SPRING
The Day Garry Shandling Tried to Talk Sense to Ricky Gervais
by SIMON ABRAMS

BEST OF SPRING
The Exceptionally Varied Gems of This Year’s Tribeca Film Festival
Our critics recommend the documentaries, genre pieces, and literary studies to seek out at the sprawling-as-usual fest
by JASON BAILEY, TANNER TAFELSKI and SAM WEISBERG

FILM
Before Film Forum Closes for the Spring, Feast on These Clouzot Noir Masterworks
by ALAN SCHERSTUHL

FILM
In “I Feel Pretty,” Amy Schumer Defeats, Discovers Herself
by BILGE EBIRI

PROTEST
NYU Students Say School Official Threatened Their Financial Aid Over Protests
School officials say they were just warning parents of possible consequences of suspension
by JAKE OFFENHARTZ

TV
What “The Simpsons” Doesn’t Get About Its Apu Problem
“For those of us involved in the respectful war against Apu, this week’s episode is one more explanation of why we shouldn’t stop talking”
by MALLIKA RAO

OBIE AWARDS Monday, May 21, 2018, Terminal 5 Tickets on Sale Now Visit [ObieAwards.com](#) for more information Co-Presented by VOICE AMERICAN THEATRE WING