

March 10, 2005 Thursday

Electric Eel Shock, with the **Thieves** and Ronin Kin

The Gearhead Records brass must've racked up some serious frequent-flyer miles while wintering in Japan, as Electric Eel Shock is one of two (and maybe more) rising sons signed by the label recently. It hardly matters that thousands of miles separate Electric Eel Shock from Gearhead's West Coast hooch haunts; the label's sonic earmarks abound: brutally lacerated MC5 riffage, frantic pacing and endless proclamations of rock and roll's life-saving properties.

And therein lies the main charm of Electric Eel Shock's upcoming U.S. debut, *Electric Eel Shock Go U.S.!*: the hilariously broken English lyrics. "I'm sorry I can't speak English well, but I wanna sing this song for you guys!" "My God is early Black Sabbath. Every day, every night, I like Ramones!" "I never gonna give it up. I gonna eat it up!" In-friggin'-deed!

While not quite the exploding fuzz-storm of Japanese punk demolitionists that is Guitar Wolf (themselves in town next week), Electric Eel Shock exhibits the universal attributes of seemingly all Japanese rock bands: an ocean-deep reservoir of energy, a healthy respect for leaving extraneous electrical noise in the mix and a ridiculously manic, wall-bouncing live show. It's not the catchiest stuff in the world, and it even gets numbing by disc's end, but it's a welcome departure from Gearhead's sometimes rote hot-rod punk.

The **Thieves** are a trio of Englishmen -- purveyors of straight-ahead hard-rock jams tinged with Pink Floyd psychedelia and T. Rex glam flourishes -- who have been marooned in Southern California the past few years. The band's **White Line EP** transcends a blah opening tune to end with the right-left combo punch of "Everynite" and "It Still Goes On." These two roundhouse rockers showcase the band's all-too-uncommon forte: a Zep-like ability to find a nice hypnotic riff, ride it out and build it up into a thunderous crescendo. Locals Ronin King open with a wall of noise that would make Phil Spector piss his pants. -- Eric Davidson and John Nova Lomax

Thursday, March 10, at Super Happy Fun Land, 2610 Ashland, 713-880-2100.