



Attack of the Killer Queens

QOTSA wants to make it with you

Pop quiz ... Queens of the Stone Age are: a) a party rock band; b) a turn-the-lights-down-low makeout band; c) a metal band safe enough for indie kids; d) a guitar god band with arena-sized riffs; or e) weird, sexy robot rock.

Answer: All of the above, sometimes within the same track. Guitarist/vocalist Josh Homme (say "Homme" like "Tommy") is a man of many, many moods, and the more noise he makes, the more we're compelled to ride that bipolar rollercoaster with him. QOTSA's newest CD, *Era Vulgaris* — Common Era — is a little bit of everything. In a sweeping sense it's an indictment of everything that sucks about today's disposable world but with an "aw, fuck it" attitude. On the track "I'm Designer," Homme sings, "My generation's for sale / How much have you got? ... It's just like diamonds / In shit." We can't change society, so let's swing with the wrecking ball.

If QOTSA's upcoming McDonald Theatre show isn't completely sold out by the time you read this, I will eat my shoe. So why bother writing this? Because I can't help but feel like I know Homme. I've been listening to his acid-flashback guitar riffs since his days with Kyuss, gosh, 15 years ago. I've seen him on stage, and he's one tough dude. But in his music

I sense this feminine quality; he's sleazy in a tender way, and departed bassist Nick Oliveri was the immovable object to match Homme's unbending force.

I know it's a cheap shot to bring up Oliveri's departure after three years and two albums, but it's interesting that the song QOTSA picked as the lead-out single for the album, "Sick, Sick, Sick," is the most ferocious, the most Oliveri-like, of the whole bunch. This song also features Julian Casablancas on keyboards. He's supposedly singing, but I can't tell. In fact, all of the guest artists are smothered in layers of Homme. I used to play QOTSA and get lost in a bong-shaped reverie, but listening to Homme's mindfuck music now seems more like work than a vacation.

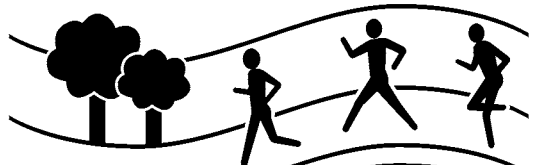
They're still good — it's just that Homme seems to have surrounded himself with an entourage who can't or won't tell him "No."

Homeboy Homme is busy with Queens and Eagles of Death Metal, and he's got his pals recording with him on *Desert Sessions* material. One beef with this album is that the funky "Make It Wit Chu" was stolen from *Desert Sessions Vol. 9*. It's a great song, but it's also on their live album. Give me something original, Josh. I know you've got it in you.

Era Vulgaris has its flaws. But don't we all? **CW**

Queens of the Stone Age, The Gasoline Angels
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