



The Black Lips (pictured),
Pierced Arrows,
The Cops
9 pm Wednesday, Feb. 6
WOW Hall • \$10 adv.,
\$12 door

All Grown Up

The Black Lips gave up the puke, but they're keeping the sass

A few years ago, going to see Atlanta garage rockers The Black Lips live was a little like watching Shamu perform at Sea World: the first few rows were the unofficial Splash Zone. Linger there, and you risked showering in one, if not two, of vocalist Cole Alexander's bodily fluids.

Bassist Jared Swilley doesn't like talking about the band's legendary onstage puking, unsolicited golden showers and guitarist-on-guitarist makeout sessions — partly because he never participated in it, and partly, he says, because "we haven't even done that in forever. We were only doing it because we were playing small dive bars to, like, 15 people, and it didn't really matter what we did."

But inside that crusty punk rock shell, there lurked catchy, danceable riffs that would eventually transcend dirty basements and shady dives. And once a band starts getting invited to classier venues — let alone to perform on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* — puking onstage suddenly becomes a bit, ah, déclassé. Not to mention the other reason the band went to such extremes: "We really couldn't play that well," Swilley explains. "Live, we were really, really bad." Eventually, after years of nearly perpetual touring, the band members grew into accomplished musicians capable of entertaining an audience without resorting to obnoxious antics.

Good Bad, Not Evil, the band's latest album, displays newfound maturity as well.

The record is the band's first release on Vice Records, and it's a marked improvement upon The Black Lips' existing tradition of blending psychedelic and trucker country styles with lo-fi garage punk. And like every other Black Lips album, *Good Bad, Not Evil* was recorded straight to tape — a Black Lips practice that, Swilley says, will probably continue. "A lot of people have said our last album sounds like it was way clean and overproduced," he says, "[but] we recorded on the exact same machines as the other albums, except on this one we wrote the vocals higher." Fans might want to check out the vinyl release alongside the CD because, Swilley says, they sound very different from each other.

Fortunately, giving up the stage antics did nothing to detract from The Black Lips' trademark comedic irreverence, which is still alive and kicking both on the new album and in the band members' dealings with the press. In the press release Vice distributes to music journalists, Cole Alexander spits in the eye of PR reps and interviewers everywhere: "On this album, we were really inspired by ourselves, especially our first two albums," he says. "They really changed the way the whole game was played. I think our work really transcends all genres and continues to influence us all on a daily basis."

Basically, Swilley says, "We were trying to go out of our way to sound pompous." Yeah, like, no shit? **EW**

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