

# AUGIE MARCH

## BOOTIKINS

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“To lose one’s life is no great matter; when the time comes I’ll have the courage to lose mine. But what’s intolerable is to see one’s life being drained of meaning, to be told there’s no reason for existing. A man can’t live without some reason for living.” - Albert Camus, *Caligula*

“It is the heaviest stone that melancholy can throw at a man to tell him that he is at the end of his nature, or that there is no further state to come.” - Sir Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriale*

Cheer up Al, get off it Tom, there’s a new Augie March album out and it goes by the delightful title of “Bootikins”. As everyone knows the much maligned, oft misunderstood Roman Emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus went by the nickname Caligula from “little boot”, the caligari, after being adopted by his father’s legionaries as a mascot and given full, miniature legionary costume including said “bootikins”. What nobody really knows are whether the tales of his atrocious reign are true or, as is suspected of many of the recorded histories of the Roman Emperors, part truths and part layered gossip with a good deal of moss. The same question of historical veracity is loudly debated at listening parties across the planet for any release by my band. Picture if you will two to five people in a bedsit, delirious on dry sherry, arguing the authority of such lines as “I was once a teen dream...” from the bootleg of an unreleased 2003 track “I Was Once a Teen Dream”. \*

Why use Bootikins for a title? Well, apart from its promise of all things brutal and aggressive, which are after all our traditional stylistic weapons of choice, I found that I was writing a lot of songs with a narrative voice that belonged to the more corrupt, venal, ambitious and callous incarnations of my character. Deliberately I was mining the misanthropic and the resigned, the “worn out man” in me next to the ambitious, energetic grafter in me. For better or worse this collection is peopled with angry, uncertain, trapped shades, Manes, from the Ancient Roman - *they will become worse the more love they have for inflicting injury*. They fear and desire youth because they are not young, they rail against death only because it refuses to claim them entirely. Grown arch and cynical because in truth they cannot cope.

“...man wants something not of this world” posits Camus’ Caesar, and the narrators of this collection have this in common also, they wish to live many lives or eternally, to dwell in the night gutter then fuck the moon in a chamber atop the mountain island Capri, grow mad with lust and grief - they are the never sated glutton, the foul politician, the impotent racist, the ‘uncompromising’ artist, the follower of logic to its invariably gruesome end, and so on. This could all just as easily be read as middle aged resignation blues I suppose, and fair cop. If you’re to re-read those quotes I’ve chosen at the head of the piece you might conclude it’s closer to the mark in fact. But who said that wasn’t a field you should till, or fertilise either?

On to the far more interesting, if briefer, back story to the recording. A fair bit was done piecemeal like the last one, between Melbourne and Hobart and whatever houses and sheds opened their doors in between. Several were begun as four track demos in Hobart, did the rounds in Melbourne, often at Second World in Fairfield with our brother Nick Treweek, then found themselves back in Hobart for overdubs. But a good chunk we also made like a proper band, in a great, dirty, old fashioned studio, to a gorgeous old 2 inch tape machine, live and kicking. And what made this already rare and special experience a thousand times more special was the unexpected emergence from retirement of the legendary, sadly now passed, Tony Cohen who wanted to make good on a promise to himself that he’d one day do something with our band. This was news, amazing news, to us, and it still amazes me that we got a chance to work with the man. The moments are ours and we will cherish them, it only suffices to say he got us feeling like, and playing like a real band again after a long interim, and we made some very good music together. I know he felt very much like himself in there and had a blast. In the wake of his unexpected passing John Olsen, engineer at Sound Park and great friend of Tony’s finished the last song we were intending to do and the superb Robin Mai, a one time assistant to Tony, mixed it. The other Sound Park tracks are mixed by Tony as only he could. Robin and myself mixed the remainder with the exception of one track mixed by our old mate and another star in the Oz Music sky, Paul McKercher.

So there it is, another Augie record summed up. I haven’t mentioned the regular boredom, the dirty little rooms, the paranoia, the constant travel, the sicknesses, the spectre of mediocrity, the 3am email ranting (me), the near insurmountable self doubt, and the looming, real possibility that at the end it all disappears into the void. But neither have I mentioned the elation that comes of writing something you haven’t written before, the frequent collaborations that bear out so well, the kindness of people, artists all, brought in to the fold to enable us to make something out of virtually nothing, the expectation and patience of a dedicated bunch of long time listeners, or the odd, vague pride in the fact that you were curious enough to do the fucking thing again. And now I have mentioned all that, so, as usual, it’s Augie, give it a few spins. May it mirror your worst selves and remind of your best.

G.Richards, 10th October, 2017, Hobart

\*This is a real thing

**Augie March**  
New Album **Bootikins**  
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