

Dungen Tio Bitar

SUBLIMINAL SOUNDS CD

Why is it more acceptable to hark back to certain eras rather than others? Why do groups sporting tight jeans, shades and an infatuation with Alan Vega in 1977 pass smoothly under the radar, while those who find inspiration in other cultural movements are considered just a breastplate away from Civil War re-enactments? The question lingers like a patchouli-scented cloud over Dungen's fourth album. Gustav Ejstes picks up where 1970 left off, backtracking along side roads left untrodden when psychedelic rock branched away into Prog. Or perhaps he just really digs those far-out sounds, and *Tio Bitar's* overdriven guitars, muffled, inner-ear bass, cardboard box drums and airy harmonies are his labour-of-love equivalent of a well polished pike.

Whatever Ejstes's motives, Dungen certainly know their acid rock, tapping into planes of both free-roving consciousness and free-loving loins. Although they play live as a quartet, on record Dungen is essentially Ejstes's studio project. But Reine Fiske's lead guitar work dominates from the start, with a series of Hendrix-fuelled solos that crackle and hum like an electrical substation. "Mon Amour" accelerates into a freakout that nods to The Stooges' debut, while elsewhere, the whammy-bar excesses are balanced by chiming counterpoint melodies and moments of nursery-rhyme whimsy (although it's impossible for non-Swedish speakers to tell the lyrics reflect this). A smattering of more pastoral moments waft soothing flute over the listener's cynical brow, while final track "En Gång I År Kom Det En Tår" foreshadows *Dark Side of the Moon's* piano-assisted gravitas. It suggests there is something in Dungen that looks to the future after all.

ABI BLISS