

## Mojo's Cold Shot: Heavy Trash, "Midnight Soul Serenade"

by [Mojo Flucke](#)

Jon Spencer's the reigning court jester of blues, a smart-aleck white guy who is part clown, part serious musician, part genius, and 100% fan of raunchy electric blues. His joyous, lo-fi music is sometimes so over the top that it's hard to take seriously. It's hard to tell if the weird, sometimes creepy words that come out of his mouth are one big put-on, or not. And either way you go on that, is it legit, or just glorified porn featuring smokin'-great guitars?

That's the difference between Spencer and his peers working the same rock-n-blues space (Presidents of the United States of America, Amazing Royal Crowns, and the Reverend Horton Heat come to mind): Their lovable, campy acts leave no doubt, and don't quite sink to Spencer's depths of raunch.

Maybe it's Spencer's hard-edged attitude that leaves us unsure of how to parse the music he made with bands such as [Boss Hog](#), the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, and now Heavy Trash, a collaboration with Matt Verta-Rey. The group's third album, *Midnight Soul Serenade*, recently hit record stores. (Sample the songs [here](#).)

But there's no denying that the guy:

- Is popular.
- Has done many good deeds by lending his name to projects (i.e., R.L. Burnside's [A Ass Pocket of Whiskey](#)) and helped bring national reknown to otherwise obscure black artists who might have gone to their graves with their talents unrecognized in the greater blues world.
- Did more his part to expose a whole new generation of music fans to blues with his Fat Possum work (of which this latest CD is a part).
- Kicks ass on the guitar and can rock out with the best of the "deep blues" crazies like the [Black Diamond Heavies](#) and [Howling Diablos](#).

So, with a little open-eyed wonder and a lot of respect for Heavy Trash's current drummer, Sam Baker (borrowed from Lambchop), as a roots-n-blues fan you gotta like *Midnight Soul Serenade*. Even though Spencer goes over-the-top, Mick Jagger-style, with the sexual innuendo (as [Dusted reviewer Jennifer Kelly puts it](#), "[Sometimes You Got to Be] Gentle's main chorus is *built around* the line 'Stick it up inside'") that, at times, can make a person a little uncomfortable. Like, you're not going to be showing off this disc to your pals when they come over for dinner, unless you wanted to be labeled as "that guy," know what I mean?

Perhaps we're making a mountain out of a molehill. No one ever gets creeped out when you play we Rolling Stones' *Some Girls*, right? And Heavy Trash's grooves — fueled by Baker's crazy, primitive drumming — are just so tasty, you can't turn them off once you hit that play button. Moreover, blues fans, Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, and Jimmy Reed had some lyrics that weren't exactly politically correct and delved into what we now consider taboo topics, right? With that being said, Mojo says: Put Heavy Trash in the same bucket and dig these potatoes.