

Heavy Trash  
Going Way Out With Heavy Trash  
[Yep Roc](#)  
2007  
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Considering their ostensibly simple approach to music, Heavy Trash provide more complexity and variety than you'd expect on their second album, *Going Way Out With Heavy Trash*. The central duo of Jon Spencer and Matt Verta-Ray have brought in guest artists from three different countries (including Canada's always-exciting Sadies) and used rockabilly and garage-rock merely as starting points for a surprisingly eclectic record. *Way Out* may not be a revelation, but it has enough minor twists to stay entertaining.

The album's opening number, "Pure Gold" sets up the misdirection perfectly. Accompanied only by a thudding bass and a smacked guitar-back for rhythm, the duo give us their typical dirtier take on rockabilly. They strip the sound down even further later for "That Ain't Right," which sounds like it just *has* to be a Johnny Cash cover through the first verse, and only deviates a little from the Sun Records sound for the chorus (mainly because the Sadies fill out a more raucous sound). "They Were Kings" takes the sound into the drag-racing tones, but maintains its roots.

Spencer and Verta-Ray do rockabilly so well that even if they stuck to that sort of genre play, *Way Out* would still be a fun record. They're not disciplined enough for that sort of release (nor should they be), though. "Outside Chance," minus the guitar solo, could have been a girl-group song, and the rock-influence delivery makes it hard to pin down to one precise influence (see much of late '60s radio). The brief "I Want Refuge" toys with gospel before giving way to the Bo Diddley blues, and "Crying Tramp" splits its sound between early rock 'n' roll ballad and country and western weeper. "I Want Oblivion" (fittingly, given its title) mines Johnny Rotten's vocal style.

If *Way Out* merely toyed with genre expectations, it wouldn't be as successful as it is. Heavy Trash's artistry lies in the group's ability to create a cohesive aesthetic across the album's 13 tracks. The album has a smooth flow, using careful production and consistent guitar tones to blend the different musical influences and varied performances into a piece. Smoothing the Sadies' engine rev of "They Were Kings" into the Eddie Cochran of "Crazy Pritty Baby" is as simple as it is obvious, but pulling together so many of the early influences of rock to both nod to and abandon makes for a far trickier task.

The group closes with the talk-blues number "You Can't Win," a meditation on touring and motion that namechecks several songs from this album and plenty from rock's early days before dissolving itself in studio effects, distorted vocals, and, ultimately, only a amplified human voice saying, "You can't win," a fitting closing for pastiche concerned with presenting simplicity. Spencer says, "The face will never be the same," and on *Way Out*, Heavy Trash show us plenty of surfaces, without ever allowing us to settle on a stable visage.

Reviewed by: [Justin Cober-Lake](#)