

death's head soup, invites the singer. Thank you, I don't mind if I do. Slab! could be The Birthday Party in funky mode were they not A Certain Ratio in sleeping mode. Though in places it's brusque and has the toes tapping 'Death's Head Soup' leaves you waiting for the killer-blow that never comes. If only Boleslaw Usarzewski's basslines were half as dizzying as his name suggests.

ULTRA VIVID SCENE: Mercy Seat (4AD)

This suffered an indignity at the hands of nasty Ms Mead and deserves a reprise. Speedballs in their throats and Velvet Underground songbooks in their pockets this kookie crew from Alphabet City are having a real cool time weirding-out on all the drugs and depravity they

can get their hands on. Dedicated to the Marquis de Sade and Hank Williams their debut single, 'She Screamed', concerned itself with an E-dropping chick who didn't quite grin herself to death. All this over a raging hybrid beat of T. Rex and Narcissus, Lou Reed and Jean Luc Godard.

'Mercy Seat' goes deeper into the abyss. Even before 'Venus In Furs' (and 'Master & Servant') sado-masochism has been a part, however small, of the rock 'n' roll ethos. Ultra Vivid Scene take it a step further.

Juxtaposing religion with raw sexuality is nothing new, but Kurt Ralske and co mix and match The Almighty – who's no doubt still recovering from Madonna trying to get the leg over His son – and S&M. Whip-crack-away.