

ULTRA VIVID SCENE

Rev (4AD/All formats)

WELCOME, ONCE again, to the weird, wonderful and slightly unnerving world of Kurt Ralske – otherwise known as Ultra Vivid Scene.

Moving away from the almost Beatles-esque visions of the previous album – 'Joy 1967-1990' – 'Rev' is more of a ragged, magnificent tiger of a recording. Dark, obsessional and intense, occasionally lyrically obscure, it fuses together a strange brew of '60s psychedelia with swampland blues.

Recorded almost live, there's a certain seductive rawness about the whole thing and a pervasive, pulsating sensuality. Not afraid to flaunt his influences, Ralske cheekily snatches the bass line from T-Rex's 'Children Of The Revolution' and turns it into 'Portion Of Delight'. Mixed with the blues is booze and a streak of genuine eccentricity. Ralske is sometimes visionary and sometimes satanic with an almost religious fervour for the underbelly of life and emotions. He's as blackly humorous as Morrissey after a Mickey Finn of the most severe order.

'Medicating Angel' is the epic of the album, all throbbing insistence, while the magnificent 'Blood And Thunder' (he mentions blood so often you'd be forgiven for thinking he was Dracula's cousin) builds up to a crescendo with layer upon layer of wailing guitars, nagging away like some gigantic toothache.

'Thief's Love Song' comes on like a sinewy 'Venus In Furs', all slither and imposing Pink Floyd guitar.

'Rev' is the ultimate dark nightmare, the head trip from the morning after the night before – and only the strongest will survive it. **(7)**

Nancy Culp