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## Men Behaving Badly: A Brief Review Of The New Album From The Bitter Springs



### **Review by Jay Mukherjee**

In the late Nineties and early Aughts I lived in the San Francisco Bay Area. Every spring my good buddy and fellow [APIND](#) reviewer, Stan Cierlitsky, used to come visit me. One of our favorite hobbies was to go to record stores in the area to find "treasures". One day in the late Nineties, Stan and I made a pilgrimage to the Amoeba Records on Haight Street in San Francisco, where we found a CD single from The Bitter Springs named "**Barbara**". Having never heard them up to this point, we took a chance. On the ride home, I put the CD into my VW Golf's CD player. After hearing "**Barbara**", my love for all things Simon Rivers began.

For over 25 years, Rivers has been the principal songwriter for The Bitter Springs (and before that, in the late Eighties, The Last Party). He is a quintessentially British singer-songwriter in the same vein as unknown-ish artists like Pat Fish (The Jazz Butcher) and Martin Newell (Cleaners from Venus), and more famous ones like Ray Davies (The Kinks). The Bitter Springs' latest album, **The Odd Shower**, is their first since 2015's **Cuttlefish and Love's Remains**, and is their first to come out on the [Tiny Global Productions](#) label, the home of The Band of Holy Joy as well. On first listen, I was surprised at how short the album is. However, in hindsight, it makes sense, as I learned later on, that it was supposed to be released on vinyl only. Once the decision was made to release it as a CD, a bonus CD, the **Excretus In Completus** EP, was added.

The album starts with two superb songs, the rollicking "**One More Sunset**" with its theme of not taking things for granted and to live in the moment, "*All of the time you don't even notice/one more sunset, one more sunrise/look up, look up, look alive*", and "**Girls in F.I.T.S. (Fighting in the Streets)**" and its boisterous recitation of various towns in England. The album contains various compositions where Rivers uses the weather as a metaphor (which makes sense, since as we get older the weather becomes increasingly important; just look at the ratings of The Weather Channel! Kidding, kidding!). There is the title track, "**Odd Shower**", and "**Keep the Rain**", which, as opposed to The Jesus and Mary Chain who were "**Happy When It Rains**", says

that, *"things are so much better/ when you've got the weather...I'd rather sweat than shiver/that's my favorite saying"*. My two favorite songs on the album are **"Men Behaving Badly"** (*"Drug dealers come around/as if they are in ice cream vans"*) with its fantastic chorus and outro melody, and the album's zenith, **"Words Of Love"**. **"Words Of Love"** is a 7-and-a-half-minute song containing a *Balearic* beat (with beautiful backing vocals provided by Kristen Morrison) that would comfortably fit alongside any Blondie song from the late Seventies. Just great.

The attached ***Excretus in Completus*** EP contains two highlights as well. **"Life Goes on Forever"**, with its surprising *reggae* riff, sounds like a great long lost James song. **"Until Love Don't Exist"**, the B-side to the **"Words Of Love"** single, is a beautiful melancholy number where Rivers laments *"You can't undo what's been done/you can't unsing what you've sung"* and *"I'll eat when I am hungry/I'll drink when I'm thirsty/I'll come when I'm caught in the grip/I'll sleep when I'm tired/I'll speak when required...I'll keep waiting and calling/it's all I can do"*. Brilliant. If you haven't done so, please check out ***The Odd Shower*** and Simon Rivers' back catalog. You won't be disappointed.

***The Odd Shower*** is out now.

More details on The Bitter Springs via the [official website](#), or the band's [official Facebook page](#).

*[Photo: Simon Rivers / The Bitter Springs]*