

SXSW RECOMMENDED

THE ACTION IS

The Action Is

By Trevor Wallace

In 2001, the Mattel® toy company hit HotWheels, Jr. with a cease and desist order in what can only be described as a smackdown by the corporate machine. The band is now known as The Action Is, not to be confused with San Antonio's former Big Drag-sters, Where the Action Is. OK, that's been established. Let us never mention it again.

Now, as South by Southwest ("the week that smacks you in the face," smiles bass player Christina Recla) approaches, the songwriting team of Recla and guitarist/vocalist Adam Farina are forward thinking and moving ahead with the ferocity of a caged and wounded biker on PCP. With their latest release, *Forget the Alibi*, The Action Is have truly found their niche – a take on the Stones through a garage punk filter. *FTA* is a transitional record for sure, "[capturing] a moment in time", explains Recla. Fresh and ready with a new drummer and lead guitar, The Action Is "even after 10-11 years still feels new" according to Farina.

Lyricaly, the band comes from a very personal angle. One poetic sentence created by a brief moment can be expounded upon and made into a song. The throes of lust, the ache and pain of heartbreak, skirting the inside edge of a drug problem – such is the passionate, dramatic, everyday subject matter The Action Is tackles with a groove and sincerity that seems to be missing from most of the band's contemporaries.

"So many bands take themselves too seriously," he continues but leaves it at that; he's not here to talk about the sea of musical mediocrity that seems to pervade the scene, local or no. Instead, let's focus on the band that added a conjugation of "to be" at the end of their name because the Action was already a band on Apple Records. The music - riff-oriented, bluesy and dark bar sleazy - "comes from the heart of a moment," says Recla, eliciting a peak at Farina's motivations. "That's why I love hardcore – the passion," he says. And that is the core of the ambition behind the band: "Does it inspire you to get lost in the moment?" he asks rhetorically. Kind of. He really does want to know.

Forget the Alibi was produced and recorded by Young Heart Attack's Frenchie Smith and



Steven T. Hall, both long-time collaborators with the band. In fact, Hall is considered "fifth member of the band," says Farina. "He toured with us and acted as a transition drummer. This was right after 16 Deluxe broke up and he co-wrote 4 songs [with us] The record is more stripped down, ballsier. It has a more garage feel; what Farina says Smith calls "ear candy", little studio tricks, have been dropped in favor of a straight up rock approach and the record jumps at you because of it.

But does it inspire you to get lost in the moment? If yes, the band has done their job. not, well, like Farina says, "Then fuck off. Go get high and come back for the party band So there.

THE ACTION PLAYS SXSW

@ HoleIn The Wall - Thursday March 17th, time TBA