

TOTIMOSHI

Totimoshi, the gritty and raw Bay Area band, have pointed to their Latin heritage as playing a key role in the shaping of their sound; turning the two disparate parts of the band's personality into music that is undeniably their own. Even the band's name is a reflection of that cultural mash-up (a name singer/guitarist Tony Aguilar's mother often used to describe his grandmother's broken English). That merging of backgrounds, Tony the son of migrant farm workers and bass player Meg Castellanos' Cuban roots, gave the couple's sound a flavor that's unique in the world of modern heavy music.

The group's 2006 release, *Ladrón*, received a 9/10 from Decibel and four star reviews from Revolver and Alternative Press (with the former commenting on the band's distinctive sound: "Has the syncopated looseness of early Sabbath and the howl-and-hammer rumble of late Eighties grunge). After touring with compatriots Mastodon, Helmet and the Melvins, Tony and Meg began work on *Milagrosa* ("miracle worker" in Spanish), a transitional release for Totimoshi that finds the enigmatic and raucous band flirting with their first conceptual release.

"I wrote most of the songs as an imaginary fight between love/compassion and hate/violence. I wanted to relay the stories as one choice versus the other both in the lyrics and melody," Tony explains. "Like on the song 'Milagroso,' where I say *'the fields of hate that turn our fate the putrid stench the violence at hand/decisions towards compassion to be made by each and every hand'* and on the song 'Sound The Horn' I continue that theme: *'atomically we infiltrate, with open eyes we subjugate to feed the ego's every hungry need.'*" *Milagrosa* also marks a number of other 'firsts' for the band including for the first time in the band's career Meg and Tony have a drummer, Chris Fugitt, who is making strong contributions to Totimoshi. Meg says of Chris, "he has added precision, incredible work ethic and what Bad Brains would call PMA (positive mental attitude)."

One more key first for the band is in terms of the team they worked with to create *Milagrosa*. This is the first time they've worked with engineer Toshi Kasai, who worked in tandem with producer Page Hamilton (Helmet) on the release. "We wanted to work with Toshi after hearing the Melvins' '(A) Senile Animal.' We were really impressed by the fact that you could get that kind of sound going completely digital since we had always recorded on to tape. Toshi had a lot of great ideas in panning the sound and his mixes turned out superb." Another addition to the production are the guest vocals of good friend Mike Kissam whose harmonies Meg describes as having, "a magical Jeff Buckley-like quality, and blending nicely with Page's and my vocals."

Totimoshi has matured into rock and roll heavyweights. More melodic, thoughtful, and driving than anything they've ever produced, *Milagrosa* is aptly named.

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