

Ty Segall: Fudge Sandwich

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Ty Segall could've gone the obscure record-collector gem route on his covers album *Fudge Sandwich*, but the bulk of these songs are by artists most people reading this review will at least have heard of: Funkadelic, the Grateful Dead, John Lennon, War, Neil Young and, if you're a little more erudite, Amon Düül II, Gong, Rudimentary Peni, Sparks. This means none of these songs seem selected to show off Segall's patrician taste. Because the originals are in such plain sight, it's a little too easy to subject the album to a contrast-and-compare test.

Segall starts the album with "Low Rider," which as War does it is a great, funky song with a playful Friday-night boozier vibe. Segall's version is all muscle-car badassery, the boots of the low rider hitting the steaming pavement. It's slower, he sounds like a ghoul, and instead of that nice horn hook there's a skull-crushing synth. The percussion is provided by a drum machine, which serves to remind us how much the rock ideal has shifted from a bunch of hairy ne'er-do-wells in a room writing music together to "projects" and solo acts augmented by hired stooges.

Funkadelic's "Hit It and Quit It" is more or less the same as the original minus the organ, bells, and portentous female choir. Once again, it replaces community with loner rage and suffers for it, given how much Funkadelic sounded like a free-for-all feather-boa freak party at its best. (He also pronounces "it" something like "Ëä.") The best of the more faithful covers is "I'm A Man," originally by Steve Winwood's early band the Spencer Davis Group. It's one of Segall's best vocal takes, a real rock yowl that's much more assertive than the nasal goblin voice he prefers.

Fudge Sandwich really shines when Segall finds skewed new contexts for these songs. The cover of John Lennon's "Isolation" argues the difference between a solo Lennon song and a Beatles song is the amount of guitar. A very *Plastic Ono* piano ballad in its original context, here it's more like something that could be on *Revolver*, with its spiky chord progression. Neil Young's "The Loner" works amazingly well as a punk song. Unfortunately, the songs he slows down instead of speeds up (Gong's "Pretty Miss Titty," the Dils' "Class War") are less effective.

Fudge Sandwich doesn't have the benefit of stylistic unity, as did his two excellent *Ty Rex* EPs of T. Rex covers, and it's only as good or bad as the individual songs. Alas, nothing here will have fans dragging the original versions to the trash bin, though "I'm A Man" might sound better in 2018 by axing Winwood's dated white-boy Ray Charles karaoke. Those who know the songs will get a kick out of seeing what Segall's scalpel

does to them. But it's hard to imagine anyone going back to them over the originals – or the four other albums Segall put out this year.