

In the FBI file on the American rock 'n' roll band Algiers—which given their prior penchant for repping the Black Panthers, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, and Afeni Shakur, among others, surely exists—under the subheading for their third album, *There is No Year*, the intelligence should soon read: *all prior analytics appear outdated... this undoes everything we thought we knew about their intentions... what hides inside them... as if they are mutating live on camera, between frames...*

Indeed, even those aware of the ideals of this outspoken four-piece will find their latest direction traversing unprecedented ground. Coming off two years of nonstop world-touring for their critically acclaimed second album, *The Underside of Power*—including Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Balkans, where they have established a rabid following; an extended stint opening for Depeche Mode in huge stadiums such as the 75,000-capacity Olympiastadion in Berlin; as well as Glastonbury 2019—*There is No Year* solidifies and expands upon the doom-laden soul of their foundation, toward an even more epic, genre-reformatting sound, one somehow suspended in the amber of “a different era,” as described by guitarist Lee Tesche.

From the instant synth-pulse of the opening seconds of *There is No Year*, it's clear that Algiers have set out to stake new ground, internally as much as sonically. At the forefront of this evolution is the centrality of power housed in Algiers' multi-instrumentalist lead vocalist, Franklin James Fisher, whose voice and words provide the backbone of the album, his lyrics sourced entirely from an epic poem, “Misophonia,” composed during his search for meaning amidst a protracted personal period of anxiety and lack.

“What I wanted to do is create a negative space wherein I can exist and engage but at the same time not be so exposed,” Fisher explains. He speaks of the record's perspective as not only a political apparatus, but an intimate, responsive evocation of his understanding that “nothing is ever what you expect”, that what might seem for now to be well known or assured is not always so, that there is no safety net. The effect, as felt on the record, is undeniable: Fisher sounds like he is singing for his life—for all our lives, really—baring his soul while the walls disintegrate around us.

The pool that he draws on is at once penetrating and exhilarating, wielding its anguish like a mirror at Medusa, full of hell. Whether he is liting over post-Lynchian synth-whorl like a spot-lit bandleader, as on “Unoccupied,” or reincarnating the spirit of thrumming 80s R&B into a proto-no wave dancefloor classic straight from 2046, as on “Chaka,” there is a tangible emotional electricity to Fisher's delivery, a personal valence that makes you want, more than anything, to *believe*, even while not quite knowing where we're headed.

No less next-level in Algiers' conception is the ambition of the aural architecture they manage to summon. Under the direction of producers Randall Dunn [Sunn O))), Earth] and Ben Greenberg [Zs, Uniform (as featured on *Twin Peaks* season 3)], the same exciting duo who first teamed up on Jóhann Jóhannsson's *Mandy* soundtrack in 2018, the clearly studied composition of this new horizon finds an outlet for turmoil via a fascinating synthesis of styles—from future doo-wop from the trapped heart of ATL, where they began; to industrial soundscapes a la Scott Walker or Iggy Pop; to something like the synthetic son of

Marvin Gaye and Blonde Redhead. The whip-tight rhythm section of Ryan Mahan and Matt Tong (ex-Bloc Party) moves back and forth from infectious menace to sci-fi soundtrack to big band fever dream, seamlessly syncing fresh continuity. Mahan's beat programming and synth constructions fill out the fibrous threshold, while Tesche's sound-sleeves and aural-layering shapeshift into a richly polished means of exploration, revealing more and more the deeper you delve.

"This is the sowing / Of the whirlwind," Fisher sings on "Repeating Night." "Don't forget it's us against them." There's something more behind the curtain of our daily-headlined pain, the album's title seems to suggest—something even larger at stake than rage, or even revolution; which is exactly what Algiers' music appears to have resolved itself to channel, and to wield. Their essence on *There is No Year* is a statement of their defiance, their desire to feel and be human even beyond the necessary fight back, sprawling head-on into the burning wind of doubt and fear and all it's claimed, arriving on the far side of calamity more alive than ever.