

ALBUM REVIEW

# The Subversive Artist Does It Again



JOHN MAUS  
Later Than You Think

★★★★★

/ YOUNG  
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It’s a rare thing to stumble upon a unicorn of a musician — one who repeatedly insists on swimming against the current

BY **NICOLAJ ROOS** / PHOTO: PAUL MAFFI  
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Just because you hold a PhD in political science and lecture in philosophy doesn’t mean you can’t howl into the void on stage. Backed by medieval modes and ecclesiastical tonalities, John Maus’ concerts have become something of a cult phenomenon — occasionally laced with singback, but always bursting with manic energy. There’s good reason he’s been dubbed “the hysterical body.”

Maus is one of the few remaining artists whose music truly resists categorisation. Somehow, through sheer perversity of vision, he’s carved out a niche that could scarcely have been conceived by AI — it’s too illogical, too unpredictable.

His long-standing collaboration with retro-futurist provocateur Ariel Pink has not always been without controversy. In recent years, both have been linked — fairly or otherwise — to Trump and the alt-right, reportedly spotted among the crowd outside the White House on 6 January 2021.

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His fragmented debut *Songs* (2006) was part lo-fi comic strip, part half-baked melodrama — vocally erratic and emotionally raw. Yet over time, Maus refined his sound; *We Must Become the Pitiless Censors of Ourselves* now stands as his magnum opus.

*Later Than You Think* marks his sixth studio album. According to Maus, the title is a *memento mori* — an inscription medieval monks would carve into skulls: “It is later than you think; hurry and do God’s work”. There are no solutions offered here, only proclamations.

His vocals, drenched in cathedral-like ambience, teeter on the edge of intelligibility — otherworldly murmurs drifting through layers of analogue melancholy. Sonically, it aligns with third-generation darkwave artists like Molchat Doma and TR/ST, with the occasional dash of monastic post-punk chant for good measure.

A particular highlight is “I Hate Antichrist,” the lead single and spiritual successor to “Cop Killer” from *We Must Become the Pitiless Censors of Ourselves*. Despite the bleak tonal palette, Maus’ deadpan humour shines through. When he flatly intones, “I hate the Antichrist — I hate the son of a bitch,” the absurdity is glorious. The track abruptly detours into what sounds suspiciously like a 1970s porno soundtrack — complete with a “melodramatic” guitar solo. It’s a bizarre, brilliant genre mash-up that shouldn’t work, yet somehow does.

Compared to earlier releases, *Later Than You Think* offers few real surprises — but what it does deliver is sharp, deliberate, and deeply satisfying. After a seven-year silence, it’s a welcome return. Maus remains a singular force: heavy, refined, and still utterly unlike anyone else — commanding a gravity and sophistication that many bands can only aspire to.



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1

Because We Built It  
John Maus

03:13

2

Disappears  
John Maus

03:00

3

Reconstruct Your Life  
John Maus

03:08

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