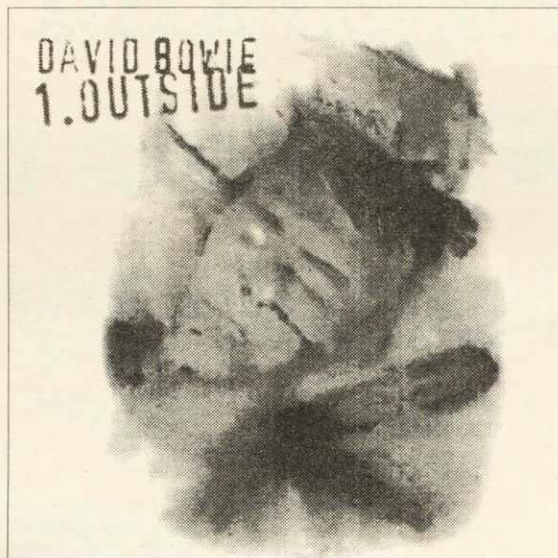


Bowie back with bells on

After a rather lengthy absence of two years from the recording studio, David Bowie is back with a brand new album, *Outside*. *The Buddha of Suburbia* was released two years ago, by Bowie, as the soundtrack to the BBC film production of the Hanif Kureshi novel. This album, though excellent, gained little support from the press and left the music store shelves with little more than a rumble.

But enough about the past. The hype surrounding the *Outside* project has reached an intensity not felt within the Bowie circle since the late 70s. *Outside* is a concept album which reunites Bowie with Brian Eno, who produced the *Heroes*, *Low*, and *Lodger* series of albums which shattered Bowie's pop persona of the early 70s. Some have referred to the new album as a concept album, others have given it the sad title of rock opera. This is not Tommy or Diamond Dogs, this album simply breaks the standard of rock opera, a term with which I would brand only the most tired piles of cheese from the early 80s (Xanadu and Streets of Fire come to mind). *Outside* can only be described as a concept album, a label which has a pigeonhole effect and does little justice to the brilliance of this new work.

Outside is based on a short story by David Bowie titled, "The Diary of Nathan Alder, or, The



MUSIC

Outside (The Diary of Nathan Alder, or, The Art-Ritual Murder of Baby Grace Blue)

David Bowie

Jones Music America/Virgin Records

Art-Ritual Murder of Baby Grace Blue." In a nutshell, the story revolves around Nathan Alder, a Detective Professor in the Art-Crime Division of the Arts Protectorate of London. Alder investigates Art-Crimes, where victims are transformed into macabre pieces of flesh-art. Baby Grace Blue is the latest victim of a horrific art-crime, murdered on the eve of the millennium, December 31, 1999 at 10:15 a.m. The story paints a world where

the body is art and objectification of pain is the status quo, where the cesspool of the underground is the mainstream and the diamond-studded umbilical cord is an ostentatious display of fertility.

Outside is a fresh new departure for Bowie, moving him in a different direction

with first-time collaborators, like Trent Reznor, and it brings forth a new sound to the familiar voice. With Reeves Gabrels on guitar, Mike Garson on piano, and Carlos Alomar on rhythm guitar, Bowie and Eno move the musicians through elements of jazz, acid-rock, heavy techno, and industrial rhythms.

The echoes of Bowie and Eno reverberate throughout the album, and although Reznor is only mentioned in gratis, his influence is overwhelming (Nine Inch Nails opened for Bowie at the Sky-Dome in Toronto; my sister said the show was unbelievable). "Outside" and "The Heart's Filthy Lesson" show that Bowie is still full of surprises; produc-

ing a new sound, with a new persona. The album is complete from beginning to end, never dragging and always enjoyable. I am biased in my adoration of David Bowie, I am never shy to admit that I have almost every piece of work he has ever produced. But I can honestly say that the hype surrounding *Outside* is justified. I put the album on the cd player at a party I threw one Saturday night and the result was overwhelming — people couldn't believe that they were hearing David Bowie.

"You mean this is Bowie... like...Modern Love Bowie?" they said. "It's incredible!"

The brilliance of this album is that it contains all the elements that will keep a die hard Bowie fan, like myself, glued to their seats and jumping for joy. **Bowie is back!** The album will grab the attention of new listeners as well, and should appeal to fans of the Reznor scene.

It is great to see Bowie back with bells on, as this album may finally remove him from the stereotype of the 70's Glam Era, and give Bowie the recognition he deserves. Recognition as an artist who is not comfortable fading into the background and relying on the work of his glory days to keep fan support alive.

Bowie has been producing albums since 1969, before I was even born, and has gone through enormous changes (no pun), dragging rock music by its nails into new directions. For all the Bowie freaks out there, look out! *Outside* is hot and is a must.

MARK FARRANT

I Heard They Suck Live
NOFX
Fat Wreck Chords

NOFX is one of the mainstays in the punk genre of music and they remain true to form on their latest effort. Fast drumming, catchy guitar hooks, and the occasional vocal harmony characterize this band, and indeed this CD.

Song titles such as "You're Bleeding", "Beer Bong", and "Six Pack Girls" are common on this 19-track, 17-song release. But remember this is a "punk" release, so some songs aren't much longer than one minute. The other two tracks of the 19 are the first and last. They are the standard live-album-band-talking-to-the-crowd tracks.

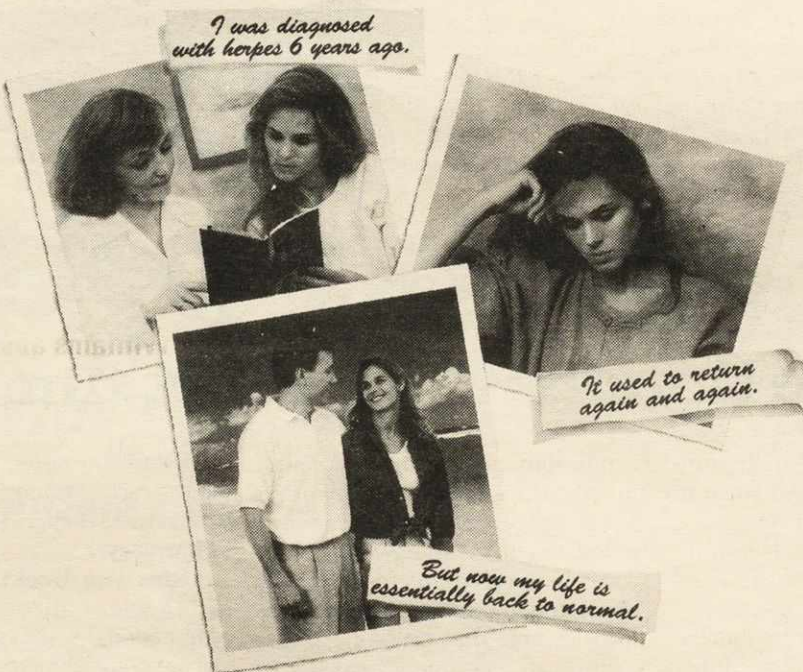
On most live albums, I find these parts boring and stupid because you just had to be there for that stuff to be worth anything at all. But NOFX actually come up with some interesting anecdotes to fill the inter-song voids, during which we find out that one of the members isn't punk enough to get spit on and that some guy is getting sent to the hospital.

This is one of those CD's that you just can't help tapping your foot and nodding your head along with the time. Some excellent guitar work and heavy drum-laden rhythms make me want to listen to this album again and again. As I write this, I listen to the album for the 5th time today.

For anyone who lacks a good, funky, poppy, upbeat, live album with more than its quota of expletives, I would recommend the immediate purchase of this album to cure what ails you.

STEVE DINN

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