

## More Hits 'n' Bits

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blasting punk songs. The style is rough and fast, alternating between boppy '77 styles, but not before dipping into the Montreal tradition of mid-eighties hardcore. This sen-



timental voyage has the basic fast chord progressions, and gruff vocals of such Montreal bands as Fair Warning, S.C.U.M., Gassenhauer, and Count Down Zero. All your favorite Canadian punk bands in one, bringing all the past decades back like a double K-Tel album.

If you feel like a sentimental blast, or maybe feeling blue trying to understand this dance stuff, this is it. There's even an Undertones cover for old times. If they want to play Punk Rock in 1992, more power to them.

— Tim Hanna

For the most part, **Mae Moore's** second album, *Bohemia* (Poetical License/Sony), is sweetly compelling. Moore's soft voice is perfectly showcased by a combination of simple acoustic musical arrangements and ethereal harmonies on songs like "Fall With You" and the title track. Once or twice she drifts towards undistinguished generic



pop ("Because of Love" being the most blatant example), but then she'll surprise you with a detour into electronic music ("Ophelia") which also works well with her voice. *Bohemia* contains the kind of music you'd listen to in a cafe on the Left Bank, wearing a beret, smoking a Gauloise and talking about Modernist art; it's worth visiting more than once.

— Ira Nayman

Jangling guitars...songs with naughty titles (like "Whips and Furs" and "Amphetamine Blue")...crazed drumming — yep, it must be 1978. You may remember **The Vibrators** for a song called "Disco In Mosco," although you may have difficulty recognizing it on *The Power of Money*, (Continuum Records) which contains rerecordings and remixes of the band's work. The songs are, for the most part, juvenile and irrelevant, with one so howlingly bad ("Every Day I Die a Little," with the classic lyric "Looks like there's gonna be a traffic jam in heaven, because...") it must be satire. After you listen to *The Vibrators*, get out your old Sex Pistols, XTC's *Drums and Wires* or early Clash or Costello to remind yourself that punk wasn't really this lame.

— Ira Nayman

# New album from Tom well worth the Waits

by David Camfield

MUSIC

Tom Waits  
*Bone Machine*  
Island / Polygram Records

For several years, fans of Tom Waits have been waiting for the veteran singer with the voice of gravel's new album. With the arrival of *Bone Machine*, most will feel the wait was well worthwhile.

After *Frank's Wild Years* (1987), an "operachi romantico in two acts," Waits released *Big Time* (1988), a live recording which consisted mainly of new versions of songs from *Frank's* and the equally fine *Rain Dogs* (1985). Since 1988, there has only been the soundtrack Waits and his wife Kathleen Brennan composed for Jim Jarmusch's recent film, *Night On Earth*.

No one took this fairly long interval as a sign that Waits, who produced 16 albums between 1973 and this year's Jarmusch soundtrack, had bowed out. Aficionados could always listen once again to an earlier record like the droll and low-key *Nighthawks at the Diner* (1976), or dig out lesser-known gems like his menacing rendition of "What Keeps Mankind Alive?" from *The Threepenny Opera*, an album of Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill covers.

With *Bone Machine*, Waits makes a rattling return with a whole album of brilliant new material (some of it co-written with Brennan) that is bleaker and darker than anything on his previous records. There is a greater use of drums, chains, pipes and other

percussion, (including the "conundrum," a contraption made of chunks of scrap metal) than ever before. Creaks and clanks a-plenty, and a lot less tinkling piano.

Gone is much, though by no means all, of the bittersweet romanticism of his mid-80s work. Now his lyrics are sprinkled with plenty of Biblical allusions, some verge on the apocalyptic. None of this is without precedent, but did anyone expect to be told twice on a Tom Waits album that heaven and hell are full?

The dark spirit of *Bone Machine* is not that of the impersonal urban world of downtown streets, bars and harbours evoked in his earlier work. Rather, this is the more intimate darkness of fields stalked by a lone demonic killer, and the quiet forest where one asks, in the words of "Murder In The Red Barn," "Is this blood on the tree/ Or is it autumn's red blaze?" Nature itself shakes as the final judgment threatens. Motifs of death abound. We are a long way from the songs of sotten lounge lizards.

From the first song, "Earth Died Screaming," one can tell something new is afoot (probably cloven). However, the album never feels repetitious, for *Bone Machine* displays a range of Waits' styles, "Jesus Gonna

Be Here" is a rasping rural blues piece. "In The Colosseum," a harsh attack on the politicians of a decaying society, features the most evil-sounding Waits voice yet heard.

"The Ocean Doesn't Want Me Today" is a briny regret, while the raucous "Goin' Out West" takes a poke at dreams of Hollywood stardom. The last cut, "That Feel" is a wistful duet with Keith Richards.

Those who think 'the real Tom Waits' is a singer of sentimental, introspective tunes will not be disappointed. "Whistle Down The Wind" and "A Little Rain," which features piano and pedal steel guitar, are two of the more familiar-sounding songs which will reassure those who aren't thoroughly enamoured by Waits' new tack.

*Bone Machine* is undoubtedly a success. I won't get into the question of whether it means that Waits is, in



graphic by  
Sadat Siddiqui

the words of a writer in the British magazine Q, a "musical post-modernist with the soul of a neo-primitivist." Suffice it to say that no one who knows this reviewer thinks of him as an enthusiast for those two phenomena, but he himself has no difficulty saying that *Bone Machine* is as good as the best of Tom Waits' previous releases.



## Days Of You still going strong

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Days Of You put forth an effort to not only protect the environment, but to educate others about realistic problems and solutions. Their new CD *The Wee Hours* is sealed by a sticker which reads, "This seal is being used to replace non-biodegradable shrink wrapping." The Days have also played many benefit concerts, including the world's first solar powered concert, Earth Day at Nathan Phillips Square, among the benefits for Tamagami, and the Canadian Coalition for Acid Rain.

The Days are also donating all profits from the song "Environmental Pharisee" to non-profit, environmental and humanitarian organizations, such as tree-planting companies, or whichever organization the band feels required funding is needed for their endeavors.

"We started doing benefits and you know, once you see the enthusiasm that the crowds have for it, and the number of volunteers and people that get involved with it, it just becomes overwhelming. Doors start opening and people start networking, and the next thing you know, you've met people in solar, people that are doing the Rouge Valley..." says Mike Lowcock, Days' keyboardist, vocalist and writer.

Their album is a funky, spiritual mixture of many elements of music, with a powerful folk sound and melody. The lyrics are provocative, and deal with such issues as the Oka Indians and the phony businesses who claim - albeit incorrectly - to be concerned about the environment.

Although *The Wee Hours* is a pleasure to listen to, the band must be seen live - ask anyone who has. Although the concert is essentially album cuts, they have more improvisational aspects live - no two of their concerts are musically the same.

Their next show is Dec. 11 at the El Mocambo. For more information on the band, call 447-DAYS.



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