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MINISTRY ΚΕΦΑΛΗΘ



by Michael Graham

Borrowing CDs, tapes, or even (gasp) records from friends can be a great way to save money. For example, take the latest Ministry album. Instead of forking over \$24 or so for the CD, I waited for a friend to pick up the tape and lend it to me. This has nothing to do with tape dubbing, which, in a public forum such as this, I believe is wrong. I just think that you should be able to listen to an entire album before deciding on whether or not to buy it.

Ministry
ΚΕΦΑΛΗΘ (Psalm 69)
Warner Bros

found myself tuning out almost completely by the beginning of the second side because of persistent, high pitched drone of the distorted vocals. Another complaint about the



Ministry, the darlings of this year's Lollapalooza, have become increasingly bombastic over the years and Psalm 69 is quite heavy compared to their previous albums (Psalm 69 is actually a makeshift title because the band chose to name it in Greek). I'm not sure whether I would call this album "metal" or "industrial" or both. I guess that for the most part it is metal with some industrial creeping into the mix.

Psalm 69 is a very distorted album. Heavy power chords and extremely overloaded vocals are found on every track. After awhile however, the vocals become very annoying and tend to homogenize the album. I

second side is the persistent, and very tired slamming of corrupt Christianity and Christianity itself. I find this kind of lyric writing and sampling to be incredibly boring. It's just too easy to do and it's been done to death by countless other bands.

If side one had been released as an EP, then I would have been more impressed than I am by the album as a whole. The first two songs, "N.W.O" and "Just One Fix" are pretty good

crunchers, and the third track, "TV II" is by far my favourite "tune" on Psalm 69. It is incredibly fast and throughout the song there are machine gun blasts of a sampled power chord/bass-drum & cymbal. It goes something like this: BLAM BLBLBLAM babababababa... The other song of note on side one is of course, "Jesus Built My Hotrod". It's a good song I guess, but it hasn't stood up to repeated listenings.

I found this album as a whole to be almost completely forgettable. There are four pretty good songs, but if I actually owned this, it would most likely suffer the same fate as the last Ministry CD I bought. Although I liked "Stigma" and the title track from *Land of Rape and Honey*, the rest just didn't cut it for me and so the CD was rarely played and eventually sold.

I wouldn't recommend Psalm 69 to anyone other than Ministry fans who like the direction that the band has been heading in. If you aren't in that camp, then you may want to try to borrow a copy and give it a listen, but if you can't find one just give CKDU a call and request "TV II". All in all, the rest isn't anything special.



Minking pure happiness

by Chris Stolz

The Minneapolis trio Walt Mink's remarkable debut *Miss Happiness* (Caroline/Virgin) is probably the best record to come out of the post-punk high-volume guitar scene this year. This band's extraordinary ten-fingered musical ability, songwriting craft and lyrical wit take them miles beyond the technically advanced and musically repetitive material coming from California (Rollins, Primus) and beyond the monstrosly dull, below-and-grind product of Seattle's past four or five years. The disc, which follows two superb demos which are sadly unavailable, shows that this band is well in control of their influences in a way that many of their contemporaries are not. Here are echoes of the Zep and Cream rhythm sections — precise, fluid chops — the metallic fury of the Bad Brains, the technical proficiency of distortion amateurs Mould and Hendrix, and the raw high-volume pop craftsmanship that made for great mid-80s Minneapolis rock 'n roll. Walt Mink, don't sound like any of their contemporaries, so those looking for more of the same from Seattle will be perplexed, but not disappointed.

Guitarist/singer/songwriter John Kimbrough, whom named his band after a favourite McAllister professor, plays with punkish energy and has the technical skills of a Hetfield or Hamlet. The songs are fluid, muscular, explosive, fine stuff indeed for pissing off the neighbours. Bassist Candice Belanoff, and drummer Joey Waronker are tight, groovy, letting the clarity of their musical vision shine through the complex riffing. Kimbrough also thankfully doesn't sing like a wounded Seattle hipster.

*hazy in
gigantic
heatwaves*

His voice is higher, clearer and the lyrics are funny ("I don't care what your boyfriend says, 'cos I grew ten feet the other day" he sings on "Chowdertown") without being forced or cute. As the song continues, a jagged tearing metal riff pumps and slides into a shimmering, momentary wall of sound. "Won't you play in my summertime?" asks

Kimbrough as the thick textures recall beaches hazy in gigantic heatwaves. The song ends soon, like summertime, leaving you with a vivid fragment of memory. It's a mark of songwriting ability not to repeat an idea to death (take note, Mudhoney) and by this measure Walt Mink are masters. In songs like the astonishing "Croton Harmon" (whose intricate adrenal riffing simply lifts the listener off his ass) or "Love You Better", the band's shifting textures and finely tuned dynamics move and develop, leaving you tantalized and satisfied all at once.

The band covers the otherwise forgettable Nick Drake's "Pink Moon" with strength, a revisionary move that recalls the Huskers' reworking of "Love Is All Around" in 1985. The only slow spot on the record is their Dream Syndicate-ish "Factory", a brooding number that doesn't quite fly here due to unimaginative drumming. Overall, this is sophisticated metallic punk-pop, ferociously loud, lyrically smart and musically complex enough to rate up there with other great first-time-out-of-the-box classics. The reviewer taped the *Miss Happiness* CD over his copy of *Nevermind*, and hasn't regretted it.

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