

The Fixx walk line between relevance and commerciality

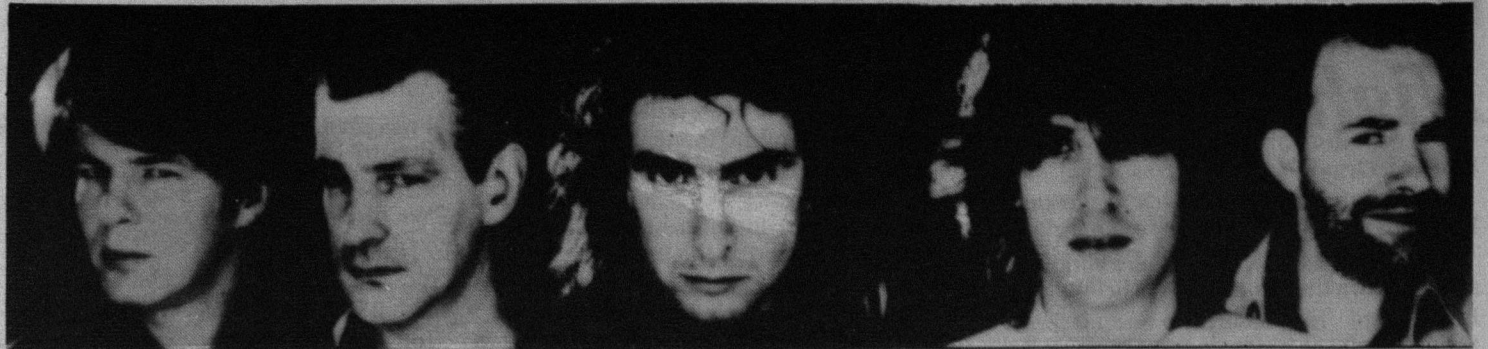
The Fixx
Calm Animals
BMG/RCA

by Mike Spindloe

The Fixx have proved themselves a reasonably inventive and intelligent pop band over the course of four albums, and *Calm Animals*, their fifth overall and first for RCA, is a worthy addition to their body of work.

Like many of their contemporaries, The Fixx appear to be concerned with the state of the world. On *Calm Animals*, lead vocalist and lyricist Cy Curnin steers clear of didacticism in favour of subtle suggestion, but his message is clear: we all have a say in the direction of the planet and we need only chart our own course as individuals to make things better. The lyrics are not difficult to understand, but they are not stanzaic pop formulas, either.

The band also have a few good melodic tricks up their sleeve. "Driven Out" has all the elements of a good single but one can't help but wonder if AM is ready for words



The Fixx, led by songwriter Cy Curnin, centre, have come up with an occasionally inspired effort for their fifth album.

like these: "Driven out by thieves/I watch them pillage the planet/fuelled by a fattening greed." "Subterranean," which follows immediately, works much the same way.

Less successful are tracks like "The Flow" and "World Weary," which plod along with little in the way of inspiration to lift them above mediocrity. Here The Fixx's lack of a distinctive-sounding lead vocalist becomes a seriously apparent handicap, but it's doubtful that anyone could save these tracks.

The Fixx may be destined, in North America at least, to fall in the gap between commercial and college radio. This would be a shame, but the band has to take some of the blame for this as they attempt to walk that fine line between relevance and commerciality.

Nomeansno means yes

Nomeansno
Small Parts Isolated and Destroyed
Alternative Tentacles

by Ron Kuipers

Kingpins of the Canadian underground music scene Nomeansno continue to amaze with their second full-length I.P., *Small Parts Isolated and Destroyed*. They are also one of the few bands around today that are cutting any new ground. They venture into new musical territory without thinking twice, and the result is something completely original.

The closest one could come to labelling this music is perhaps "jazzcore." They have that hard, thrashy feel, but what's really underneath the music is a strong jazz influence. The music doesn't rely on anything standard to most rock and roll. It also changes drastically, both within songs and from song to song. There are no rules for Nomeansno. And yet the music has form, and is not chaotic as the previous description implies. It's just that no description can do justice to this album. It

must be heard.

The band discusses many of the problems associated with modern man's inability to critically examine his own life and society. From inaccessibility and computerized information in "Dark Ages," to the problems of modern relationships in "Real Love" and "Lonely," Nomeansno leave few stones unturned. They point out cruel ironies in "Dark Ages": "...it's self-extinction that keeps us alive." This irony resurfaces in "Lonely." Here, a frustrated sense of apathy emerges where communication breaks down: "You're not bad, you're not good/You're a solid block of wood/ You have eyes but cannot see/ Why I despise your company." But all is not gloom, says Nomeansno, because "for every defeat there will be a victory."

People would soon learn how to take no for an answer if it were up to this band. Uncomfortable but deeply perceptive, Nomeansno offer nothing besides their honesty and incredible musical ability. This band knows what they're doing not only in a musical sense, but in an intellectual sense as well.

Jane's Addiction shocks

Jane's Addiction
Nothing's Shocking
Warner Bros.

by Ron Kuipers

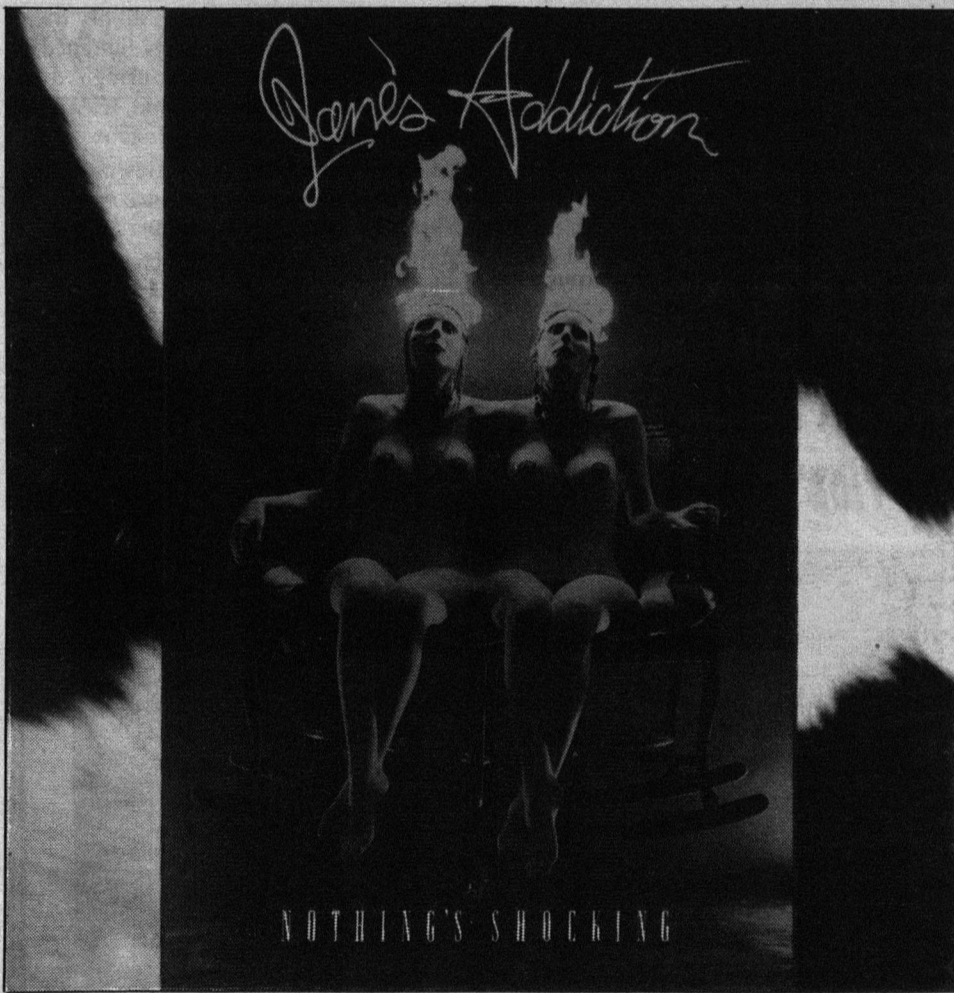
Something is definitely shocking. They call themselves Jane's Addiction, and this album can be described as no less than an assault on comfortable complacency, in both its attitude and music. If sound could be extended in space, as soon as the needle contacted this record two arrows would shoot out of the speakers and split your head open, forcing you to look inside and examine the contents.

This isn't thrash. The music is hard in a more Led Zeppish fashion. Still, Jane's Addiction are no clones. They have their own unique sound to offer, and they dish it up with unrelenting intensity. The music varies widely from song to song, from electric to acoustic and everywhere in between. Horns are even used to great

effect in the song "Idiots Rule." A few songs, such as "Summertime Rolls," help vary the pace of the album by slowing it down. Yet each song is nailed home.

The lyrics leave no room for escape either. Singer/lyricist Perry Farrell proffers up unique viewpoints in stream-of-consciousness fashion. Some of the more accessible messages come on the song "Ted Just Admit It..." Here, Farrell comments on modern media, saying, "they showed me everybody/naked and disfigured/nothing's shocking." Later on in the same song he screams repeatedly "sex is violent." He foments against inaction during "Idiots Rule," saying "If there's a pole/planted in your back/then you're a fixture/not a man." Its stuff that just won't leave you alone.

Baby's on solid food now. At least that's the state of rock and roll as Jane's Addiction see it. There's no hiding from this record, or at least much of what it contains. It's looking for you in one way or another. Find it before it finds you.



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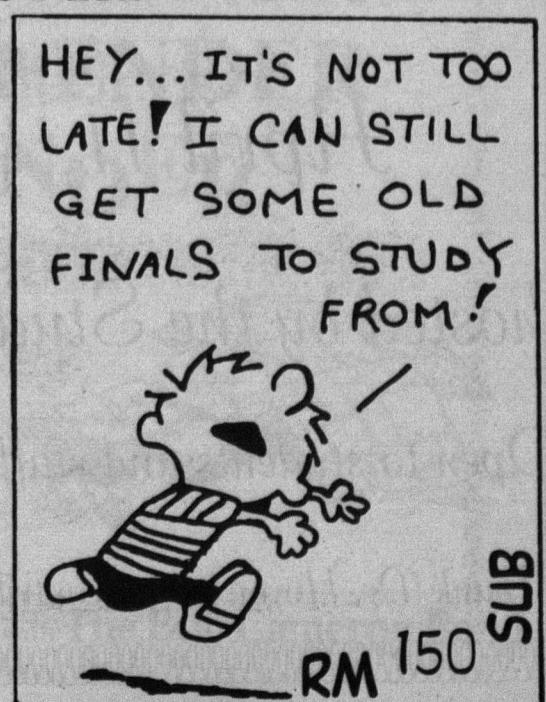
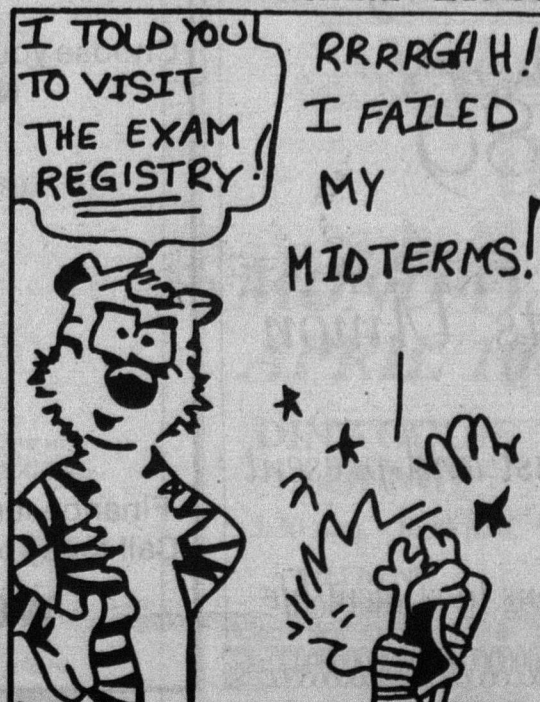
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