

ARTS

Music to fool the world; now and then

BY MICHAEL GRAHAM

TROMPE LE MONDE marks the fifth, and possibly final, release by the Pixies. For the uninitiated, the Pixies are the



best indie rock band out of Boston — perhaps the planet! This album is very diverse and shows the musical growth that the band has undergone. The name "Pixies" must be a joke because such a name conjures up an image of Debbie Gibson or Tiffany playing their easily digestible pop. This band is anything but boring, light pop. They rock! Their concerts rarely fail to cause near riots in the pit at the front of the stage.

This album carries on in the same vein as previous efforts, but without any sense of redundancy or stagnation. What to expect? Well... hrm... distorted guitars, non-distorted guitars, sparse and interesting use of keyboards, well constructed raunch,

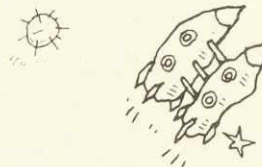
MUSIC**Pixies****Trompe Le Monde**

inventive rock-pop, and for any Jesus and Mary Chain fans there is a fantastic cover of Head On. It's very hard to pin the Pixies' sound down. Black Francis (aka Charles Thompson) lead singer/guitarist contends that he is going for a "surf" sound, but any Beach Boys influence is non-existent on *Trompe Le Monde* (a loose translation of the title is Fool the World).

Vocally, Black Francis' delivery is all over the place: screaming at the top of his lungs, singing smoothly,

talking, talking into an answering machine, and yelling. On *Trompe Le Monde* he proves that he can sing. Kim Deal does some fine backing vocals and her bass playing has never been better. It is a shame that she is not heard as much as in some of the earlier albums.

Lyricaly, Black Francis has stuck to his seemingly stream of consciousness style. He also continues to sing about extraterrestrials, UFOs,

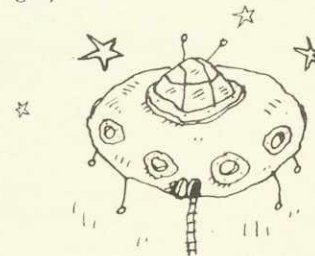


intergalactic travel, aerodynamics — heck, he even manages to work in a physics formula! This stuff is great in its oddity. Most of his lyrics are difficult to interpret, others are more difficult, and the rest...well maybe only Black Francis knows.

There is a rumor that this could be the last Pixies album. The reason for this is band politics: the Pixies is a dictatorship; Black Francis is the dictator. How they have managed to stay together this long is a mystery to me. On the current tour Francis,

fearing a loss of his popularity, has put a gag order on Kim Deal, refusing to let the band perform "Gigantic" or any of the few songs which she sang on previous albums. On a related note, Kim Deal has formed a fairly successful, but so far obscure group called the Breeders in which she is the vocalist. So depending on whether Francis' egomania subsides and what musical direction Kim wants to go in, the Pixies' future is in the air.

Despite this bleak outlook, *Trompe Le Monde* is fantastic. It did, however, take about a week or so to grow on me, so give it time if necessary. There is only one song that I still don't really like, but fortunately it is barely a minute long. Not only is the music great, but so is Vaughan Oliver's cover art. So if you're looking for an album to blow your speakers and/or challenge your sense of reality, I highly recommend this album.



BY ROLAND STONE

CKDU'S HEAR & NOW compilation features 13 local acts and covers a wide variety of musical styles. Though the biography on the cover would have you believe that this area is teeming with "ferociously original new bands and music", the product more correctly exemplifies the fact that, though these bands are producing their own music, they are not entirely original. Read on.

MUSIC**Hear and Now****Various**

Cool Blue Halo: "Sheila Comes Around" This opening track kicks things off with a typical 16-bar guitar intro and goes into a predictable guitar-rock song. The verse/chorus/verse/chorus/bridge arrangement is also typical and because of it the song is nothing more than average. The sound is greatly reminiscent of the Northern Pikes, but through the guitar solo approached the realms of the Vapours (Turning Japanese). Very Canadian.

Sloan: "Underwhelmed" Sloan has an original sound that slightly resembles some Jane's Addiction but the song does not really go anywhere. At least twice it feels as if the tune is about to break out into uncharted territory and then the whining vocals return to dwell on the repetitive verse. The lyrics are annoying and the repetition of the final line sums the song up: "I miss the point."

Adinsong: "Remembrance Day" I had no idea that anyone still thought of, let alone was inspired by Duran Duran. This sub-parsyntho-pop song features lame, uninspired vocals and

an irritating, uncreative drum machine beat worthy of those synth icons Soft Cell. Music that does not matter! The only plus on this track is the female back up vocalist, who smokes.

Mod'm World Thang: "Just Respect our Culture" The beat is good, the horns are cool, and the lyrical message is a valid one. Unfortunately MC JROC delivers his vocals with no feeling whatsoever and the track is greatly depreciated by this fact. What this song needs is emotion, rising head and shoulders above the rhythm, and because it is not there the song has no punch. With so much rap in existence these days, a group must have something unique in order to stand out. This does not.

Leonard Conan: "Had it Made" This tune is short, sweet, hummable and memorable. It has a fast-paced, grooving acoustic style which is R.E.M.-ish but not totally derivative. Leonard Conan is an honest sounding band with a full, rich sound, and "Had it Made" features a chorus that isn't predictable. By far the best song on side one!

Adrenalin: "Deadly Twist" Adrenalin's sound is tight and powerful but resembles every other thrash band that emerged in 1985 after Slayer released "Hell Awaits". At times they play too fast for their own good and the song loses some of its crunch. The guitar solo is a complete rip-off from a track on

Voivod's first album ("Suck Your Bone" maybe). Dated thrash metal for dedicated fans only.

Rose Vaughn Trio: "The Song of the Fog" This unique trio creates a wonderful, environmental sound using just bass, flute and vocals. It is difficult to describe but is certainly the most original piece of music on the compilation and is highlighted by some beautiful vocal harmonies.

Infra Dig: "Face" Infra Dig, who were once Tetras, have gone from a stupid name to an even stupider name, but have certainly grown musically in the process. This is a folksy, acoustic song with introspective lyrics which for some reason reminds me of the Beatles. Similar to that Extreme ballad, "More Than Words", but not nearly as contrived and far more enjoyable. The band may have listened to a major dose of Bread for influence. Good ending.

Spike N: Kind of like Peter, Paul and Mary on speed, it is another of the fast-paced, folk-influenced bands to emerge in Canada and can most closely be likened to the Barenaked Ladies. One question though, who played the mandolin solo?

Roland Blinn: "No One Listened"

He's setting himself up with a title like that. This is a mid-paced, inoffensive song that goes nowhere and sounds like a combination of a male Go-Go's meets the Buzzcocks. One word of note, Roland, lose the British accent.

The Big Picture: "Seven" Here we have a fast-paced, funky tune featuring a rap about the characters on Sesame Street, and revolving around the Sesame Street verse which counts from one to twelve (remember?). It even has a bridge singing the Sesame Street theme song. Because of all this, it is the most likely tune to stick in your head. Fun stuff with a creative, unpredictable mid-section and a killer bass sound from Jonathan. The only problem here is that the song is too nice and might be appreciated more by a Sesame Street audience than rock or underground music fans.

Aimless: "Turning Green" Except for the cheesy, high-school romance lyrics, this song is great. Aimless has improved immensely over the past

year and their melodic hardcore sound is still Doughboys-ish, but is striving for originality. "Turning Green" is creative and powerful, has cool raunchy vocals, and does one thing the rest of these bands don't do: it kicks ass. Aimless is the most likely band on this compilation to gain recognition outside Canada.

Weasel Faced Judge: "Bacon & Egg Bicycle" Correction, this is the most original sound of this compilation, and it is bizarre. Weird metal with Zappa-ish lyrics about a quest for a cosmic breakfast. Or something like that. Hard to describe, harder to listen to, and yet I'd listen to it again. "Bacon & Egg Bicycle" is amusing and enjoyable, and full of surprises. I didn't want it to end, and I'd like to witness this live.