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Arts



eclectic giants

by Valerie Hochschild

They Might Be Giants
Flood
Elektra/WEA Records

They Might Be Giants are two guys named John whose last names sound like small towns in Pennsylvania. The one without the safety glasses plays the accordion. Everything about them is neat. Their albums — including this one — are like big boxes of Bits'n'Bltes. Every handful is a whole new ballgame.

The 19 handfuls in this new box are bigger and more nutritionally balanced, as benefits a first effort on a major label. But that still doesn't mean they can sustain focus for more than two minutes.

They are carnivalesque, garage '60s, Asian polka. They sound like k.d. lang on acid doing a Saturday morning cartoon theme, or Ennio (Mr. Spaghetti Western) Morricone scoring a '60s beach movie starring Bauhaus. And behind the whole second side is the mysterious chopping of distant helicopters. How am I supposed to review something like this?

Well, I'll tell you that I think this is a nice album and suggest that you listen to it yourself to learn that escapism does not require stupidity and weirdness does not require anger.

Thank you.

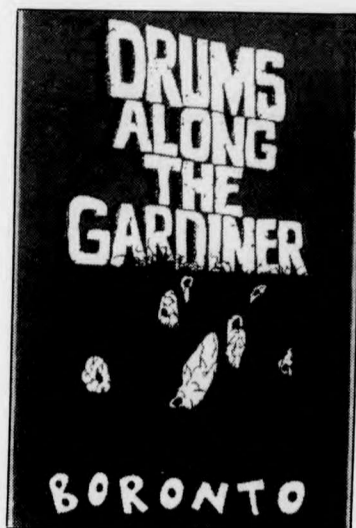
reviewer gets headache

by Howard Kaman

Boronto
Drums Along The Gardiner
Miracle Records

The best thing about *Boronto* is its press release. The single sheet of paper includes a whole pile of information, including the names of Drums Along The Gardiner members (Pete, Zack, Drew and Brian — who has left the band, only to be replaced by Ian) and the address of their fan club.

According to the press release, *Boronto* is a tape "for teens bent on... well, listening to music." Well, this is pretty harsh music.



Boronto was released on Miracle Records and its press release proudly states, "If it's a hit, it's a miracle!" They're not kidding.

Drums Along the Gardiner's style is reminiscent of Sex Pistols-era punk with piles of fuzz-buster guitars and raging drums. With all the musical explosives, it leaves me wondering why they bothered with a vocalist.

To tell you the truth, *Boronto* gave me a headache. But then again, maybe it was supposed to; the music has all the claustrophobic intensity that would cause a headache for any person not accustomed to its style. On the other hand, if you love grinding, pounding noise, then *Boronto* is for you.

But, it gave me a headache.

the writer's block



Ira Nayman is a York student with vast experience as a writer. Ira has written numerous newspaper columns as well as dabbling with CBC television and radio.

by Ira Nayman

I cannot begin to imagine what ludicrous compulsion led me to sign up for intramural tackle football in junior high school. In hindsight, I believe my primary motivation was Thanatos.

Understand, I've never been taller than five foot five and a half inches (but, it's that extra half inch that makes all the difference) in my life. I've suffered from asthma since I was old enough to breath. This was also about the time society and I started falling out over the nature of reality; I have no doubt that a lot of guys, intent on representing society's point of view, were looking forward to stomping my ass into the ground.

All in all, wanting to play tackle football in junior high was an act of suicidal optimism on my part.

Due to an untimely bout of bronchitis (which is basically asthma on steroids), I missed many of the practice sessions, so I was relegated to defense. I missed a lot of the season, too (a recurring case of chronic homework), but I did manage to get into the last game of the season.

Now, high school football is probably not the game with which you are familiar. We didn't go in for such subtle strategies as passing. The idea was to give the ball to the biggest player on your team and dare members of the other team to tackle him on his way to a touchdown. The biggest player our opponents had was six foot four; clearly, this was an idea whose time had come.

I was playing safety; the idea was to keep me as far away from the actual play as possible. On their first down, they gave the ball to the tallest guy on their team; I considered myself lucky just to be able to keep up with him on his way to the endzone. In high school football, as in philosophy, more viable ideas invariably supercede less viable ones.

The second time he ran for a touchdown, I was grateful the guy didn't rip one of my arms off. The captain of my team felt it was time we had a talk.

He made the reasonable suggestion I try and tackle the man with the ball. Throwing my head at his feet was mentioned. As I watched my team's lightning attack take them as far as mid-field (for some reason, we had no mountain men), I wondered if throwing myself in front of a moving train might not be a fairer test of my budding masculinity.

The moment of truth came soon enough. The human battering ram ran around our defensive line,

leaving only me between him and six more points. Remembering what they taught us in practice, I threw myself at his legs and squeezed.

It was textbook perfect. Only, HE DIDN'T FALL DOWN! With me on the ground clinging desperately to his legs, he couldn't move forward; otherwise, I was just a minor inconvenience.

I looked up. The guy's run had taken us to the sidelines, right in front of three cheerleaders and a dozen spectators. But, those spectators were from the "popular" clique in the school, and they just happened to include a girl I had a terrible crush on at the time.

I do not remember them laughing — I think everybody was too stunned. I know it wasn't eternity, but the five or six seconds it took for one of my teammates to realize what was happening and come over and knock the guy down was as close to it as I ever want to get.

It was a crazy, foolish and, ultimately, futile gesture; our opponents scored on the very next play.

Why do I tell this story on myself? Two reasons: the first is that, as a satirist, it is my job (and, I must admit, my pleasure) to make fun of other people's foibles and failings. I believe it is only fair I treat myself the same way. I would be a hypocrite if I judged other people's behaviour and actions absurd, but not my own. (It's also a great way to stay humble.)

In a different vein, once the embarrassment wore off (it only took 10 years) and I started telling this story to friends, I found them quite supportive. There is an element of the awkwardness of adolescence in the story that seems to strike a common chord with many people who hear it. I like that.

Now, if only I could find a way to stop flinching when approached by guys who are six foot four!