

The Vinyl Phyle

Sea of Love above average

It Came From Canada #5 Various Artists Og Records

Og Records, the Montreal-based alternative music label, has made a yearly ritual of releasing a compilation of alternative Canadian music. The fifth release in this highly successful series showcases 16 bands from across the Great White North, and it delivers the same tried and tested Og formula: garage rock which makes up in energy and humour, what it lacks in technique and polish.

One of the record's highlights is The Gruesomes, whose brand of 60's teen punk has made them internationally known. Their contribution is a faithful cover of the Wailer's "You Weren't Using Your Head," a Louie-Louie-ish number sung by departed guitarist Gerry Alvarez, recently replaced by Edmon-tonian Al Boyd. Also outstanding is the previously unheard-of 64 Funnycars, a combo out of Victoria. Their very catchy "Boathouse" sounds like a more rocking Johnathan Richman. And UIC's "Light It & Fly" rocks mightily, though this recording is only a shadow of their phenomenal live show — don't miss

them when they come through town later this month.

My personal favourite, however, has to be Deja Voodoo's "Let Elvis Die." This demonstrates why the originators of 'Sludgeability' are one of Canada's most enduring alternative bands: short, funny and focused, the song takes on the whole "Elvis is alive" phenomenon with characteristically skewed humour.

Virtually every compilation has its weak spots, and *It Came From Canada #5* is not unique in this respect. Calgary's Vindicators, whose "Thinking of Birds" was a standout on the Mister Garager's Neighbourhood compilation, disappoints with "You're Too Much." A sluggish tempo and overwrought, badly recorded vocals scuttles this one. But easily the worst song is Chris Houston's "Stupid TV Christians." Both musicianship and songwriting are uninspired (there are no chord changes). Houston's second-rate Mojo Nixon shtik is unbearable this time.

It Came From Canada #5 is a fine addition to the series. The occasional sloppiness and the uneven production doesn't matter; this music is great fun.

- Paul Murphy



The Untouchables Agent Double 0 Soul Restless/Twist

The last band I heard of to have their own comic book was KISS, so when I got a tape with a comic book, by a band named after a recent hit movie, I got suspicious. Determined to ignore the omens, I popped the cassette into my blaster and was pleasantly surprised.

"Agent Double 0 Soul"—the song—owes its sound to Sam and Dave, whose licks are lovingly reproduced and updated into a funky title track. The Untouchables throw in a five-man horn section, a heavy beat (laid down by Willie "Dred" McNeil on drums,

and bassist Derek "D" Breakfield), and some Atlantic Records harmonies.

The band also does a great cover of "Under the Boardwalk", combining enough of the original sound to make it recognizable with enough new licks to make it interesting.

Unfortunately, the rest of the record falls somewhat short. After the great R&B start, the rest of the music wanders between "lite" rap and funk, with only occasional bursts of rhythm or blues.

For a sit-down-and-listen recording, *Agent Double 0 Soul* is weak. For get-down-and-boogie music, however, The Untouchables provide the required rock-steady beat. Unless you're addicted to Zep, you'll find this a solid dance/party tape.

— Randal Smathers



Sea of Love Cineplex Odeon

review by Glenn St-Germain

From the ads, it looks pretty standard — a murder mystery where the detective in charge of the case falls in love with a prime suspect. So it is with *Sea of Love*, starring Al Pacino. However, this film delivers more than one would expect.

Frank (Pacino) is a twenty-year veteran of the NYPD. Recently separated from his wife, lonely, he turns to drink to fill the void in his life. But an unusual case gets his attention.

If you have seen any of the ads, you know, the set-up: men are being murdered, men whose only common link is that they all have recently placed an ad in a singles' magazine, looking for companionship; they all get much more than they bargained for.

So Frank and his partner (John Gordon) set a trap by placing their own ad in the magazine in hopes that the culprit will take the bait. Sure enough, one of the respondents (Ellen Barkin) winds up being the prime suspect,

while she and Frank become romantically involved.

What follows is an above-average suspense thriller, as Frank walks the tightrope between his job (finding and apprehending the killer) and his relationship with Helen. Making things more intriguing are the conflicting clues in the case, some implicating Helen, some not.

In a case like this, there are only two choices: either she is the murderer, or she is not. However, the mystery (the resolution of which is not till the end) is only part of it. What really makes this movie work are the performances of Pacino and Barkin as Frank and Helen. Their relationship is electric, filled with raw energy and passion. Frank has found someone to fill the void left by the departure of his wife. But the mystery gives their relationship, and the movie, a sharp edge.

Director Harold Becker deserves some of the credit, using pacing, lighting, and even music to set the mood. All in all, this movie is an above-average mystery well worth a look.

