

SNFU: Better than anything near Top 40 on LP

SNFU
Better Than a Stick in the Eye
Cargo

by Rodney Gitzel

OK, so I'm no expert on SNFU: I've only gone to one of their gigs, and I'd never heard any of their other recordings (though I have followed them quite closely in the various papers for years, now). But so

what? Who says critics need credentials? Then again, who's criticizing?! This album is GREAT!

SNFU is an Edmonton band, for those who don't know, and stylistically they end up somewhere between speed-metal and hard rock. Indeed, the album opens with a wonderful and forceful barrage of sound — and, as is typical, the song is about futons (yes, the furniture)!

Having no time for turgid dirges, SNFU

produces songs that are either incredibly funny (in the satirical vein) — the aforementioned song about futons, vengeful G.I. Joe dolls, West Edmonton Maul — or else quite, well, sensitive, if you'll believe that "metalheads" might be capable of it.

"In the First Place" explores the idea of friendship in a way that is more real than you could ever expect from anyone NEAR Top 40. "Tears" asks "when's the last time you've tasted their taste?", while "The Happy Switch" addresses faked happiness (with a bit of Santa, a la Chi Pig). "Straightening Out the Shelves (of my Mind)" needs no further description, and "The Quest For Fun?" is an honest one.

Though these songs are so wonderful,

do not be misled into thinking that they are wonderful poetry — or at least not as English profs would see it. But the words all rhyme, and the songs are in time, and I think it is very much the odd lilt (swagger?) of SNFU's lyrics that make them so appealing. You want an example? "I went and opened my big mouth again/ And I've lost myself another friend/ But if people like that are so easily phased/ Then maybe they weren't real friends in the first place." How's that? (A lyrics sheet is provided, incidentally, along with some nifty pictures.)

What else? The music is neat! And if you have any shares in Skull Skates, you will love all the advertising the band does for you.



Jordan's perfection boring

Stanley Jordan
Flying Home
EMI/Manhattan

by Scott Gordon

Stanley Jordan is beginning to make a name for himself in the jazz world. His guitar is every bit as athletic as Paul Scofield's, but more subtle, and he is just as wild as John McLaughlin, but somehow also more controlled and methodical.

These influences are evident on his version of "Stairway to Heaven." Personally, I liked this song, but when I grew up, everybody learning the guitar played it, and at the drop of a beer, or a lull in the music, they would whip out their "axe" and regale the crowd with the Plant/Page classic and people would ooh and aah. I went home and broke Led Zep IV.

I expected fire from Jordan after listening to the first side ("Street Talk" is great), but his version of "Stairway to Overkill" is dull. Technically, his playing is superb and incredibly controlled, but nothing new. He learned the song, and learned it well, but why put it on an album? Especially an album that contains "Brooklyn at Midnight," a song that combines technique with emotion and ice cold discipline with red hot feeling. "The Time Is Now" combines funky bass, tinkling organ and wailing guitar breaks perfectly, as does "Can't Sit Down."

With Jordan's technical excellence and emotion, *Flying Home* is a near-perfect album, but perfection, or near-perfection, can be boring after some time. If he could put aside his quest for perfection and put his real self and emotions into playing, he would be a true great. But he's young, and he's got the time. After all, he can only get better.

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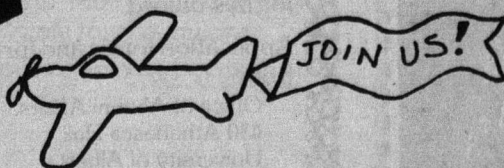
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