

Dead Kennedys put democracy to bed with punk

Dead Kennedys
Bedtime For Democracy
FRINGE/Alternative Tentacles

review by Dragos Ruiu

"Punk's not dead
 It just deserves to die."

"Hardcore formulas are dogshit
 Change and caring are what's real"

D.K.

Rah! Die Fundamentalists! Nazi Punks Fuck Off! Talk - Action = Zero! Oh, sorry. It's tough to stay in control. The Dead Kennedys are back with a great new album.

Oh boy, punk may have gone down the tubes, but these guys have enough balls that they may just be around forever. It's enough to get the adrenaline flowing again.

In these days of mindless formula punk, ultra-violence, and hardcore, the Dead Kennedys are really a breath of fresh air. Yes, they are back with a new album entitled *Bedtime For Democracy*, and it is in classic D.K. form.

D.K. is a mega-giant in punk. This San Francisco-based trio weaned most of the punks in our generation off of top-40 and the Ramones. But despite their popularity, for a while there it looked like they would go the way of all those punk bands, screaming themselves into oblivion.

It seems they received a shot in the arm when they decided to include a famous piece of previously published art by H.R. Giger with their last album *Frankenchrist*. This art dared to portray artistically rendered male anatomy. (Yep, penises!)

Immediately they became a prime target for the Parent's Music Resource Center (PMRC), and the California police authorities started hassling them. I guess all this spurred them to release a fresh new album. And this album is fresh — it has all the anger of old, as well as D.K. trademark biting sarcasm.

Included with the album are reproductions of a clipping montage of by Jello Biafra, the band's lead singer, as well as an excellent treatise on the politics of censorship by the No More Censorship Defense Fund. The informational essay on censorship is worth the price of the album by itself.

The album contains 22 tracks of a variety of hardcore punk. It is good as punk music, and brilliant as political satire. Yes indeed, this is the album to put on when the Jehovah Witnesses come around.

D.K.'s song themes have been heard before, but never with such an incisive political edge. The targets of their songs are the evils of the religious right, the slow stomp on civil rights the U.S. government is in the process of, etc... The songs are so sarcastic that they become extremely funny sometimes — I just about died laughing through "Rambozo the Clown"!

A new theme on this album deals with that slowly lumbering and dying dinosaur — punk music itself. It seems that even in D.K. land it is degenerating, and Biafra, as usual, has some eloquent, caustic words about it.

Well punk can go to hell, as long as these guys keep fighting for their cause with their guerrilla music. They have managed to stay true. As long as there are guys as dedicated as these, Meese, Pat Robertson, Fallwell, et al. have a reason to be afraid.

Rah!



Pleasant new age jazz

Scott Cossu with Eugene Friesen
Reunion

Windham Hill Records

by Moreen Murray

For those who like their jazz very mellow (very), Windham Hill performer Scott Cossu acquiesced on February 11 at the Yardbird Suite. Windham Hill records is the company which has been much maligned for its "New Age" jazz — maligned by jazz aficionados who claim that the music is too much like "muzak" — colourless background noise for elevators — or Yuppies.

Unfortunately Scott Cossu's musical selections did not do much to improve that reputation. Accompanied by the very talented Van Manakis on guitar, the majority of Cossu's compositions for piano and guitar were tranquil waterfall-like renditions, classical-pop images suited more to Andre Gagnon than the usual lively improvisations and variations expected of jazz.

The selections which Cossu and Manakis did shine on were those of Latin-inspired rhythms (revealing his studies in ethnomusicology) which not only displayed the virtuosic guitar playing of Manakis but also served to wake the dozing audience up. Particularly nice were "Reveille", rich in colour

and texture and mood, the lively "Sanibel" and a tribute to Charlie Mingus. I only wish that there had been more spirit and less ghostly after-images.

A word to the wise — if you take Scott Cossu's "Reunion" on a long car trip, and put it in your tape deck, hoping it will keep you awake — forget it. If, however you have heeded your stress management course and are taking some time out for constructive relaxation — this is the ticket.

Released by Windham Hill records — they of the "New Age" music fame (or infamy) this collection contains lyrical variation on ballads reflecting sunrises, birds, and other back-to-nature themes. I confess, however, that I found several selections to my liking. Cossu collaborates to good result with violinists, and cellist to create pretty ballads and chamber-like renditions.

Particularly pleasing is the tender and evocative "Gwenlaise", the haunting and percussive strains of "Sanibel", the Latin flavour of "Moira" (one of the more lively tunes), and the breezy "la Paloma". All in all, this is nice music. A pleasant recording. A trifle too relaxing at times, but then, it won't have your neighbours calling in a complaint about disturbing the peace.

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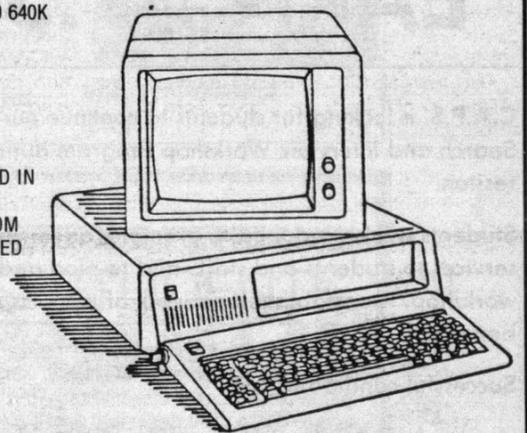
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