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REVIEWS & SPEWS

The overall appearance is total visual and audio chaos and that is where this cd-rom idea falls apart. It's chaos, but you are in control. You know what's coming next, you can view whatever you want when you want and you can quit when you want. Total sensory overload is something that only has power when you are being subjected to it and have no control over it.

So after I had gone through every aspect of the computer "presentation" and my eyes couldn't take anymore of the 16 screens flashing images at me, I decided to just throw the thing into my stereo. What I found was some pretty interesting hip-hop. It is well-sampled with very tight beats. So even though the computer visuals don't work on a fundamental basis, there's still some amazing music to be heard. And the computer stuff is engaging the first time around, I suppose. Watching full screen videos on a computer screen is kinda novel.

EBN is good, but for much more perverse media manipulation and sampling try some Negativland. For a more insane video get in touch with the Church of the Subgenious. The latter is all over the net. Go see EBN in concert for the real experience. It can't be had in front of your computer.

MIKE GRAHAM



Spinner

Brian Eno and Jah Wobble
Gyroscope/Virgin

David Toop, in *Webs*, writes, "...an aesthetic, meditational construct, an enabling tool perhaps, which relegates this foreground clatter and clutter to the edges of the picture for a brief period and focuses instead on fleeting patterns of light, shadow, color, sound and silence." Toop was describing a Japanese garden. But, as he would later write, this is not an entirely inaccurate description of the music of Brian Eno.

Eno, the recognized creator, developer, and reigning master of ambient music, has never been one to construct coherent songs, by the conventional meaning of the word. But his music is still lyrical, moody and stirring, as most good music is, even though it consists primarily of droning synthesizer atmospheres. His work with artists such as David Bowie, Peter Dinklage, and U2 are world-renowned classics of progressive rock.

Parts of Eno's new album, *Spinner*, fit Toop's picturesque description, others do not. *Spinner*, unlike most of Eno's "film" music, was at one time actually connected with Derek Jarman's

1994 movie *Glitterbug*. The basic tracks, featured in the film, were recorded by Eno alone, and mostly at night; I must admit that it shows. These tapes were added to and expanded upon by Jah Wobble, a fellow English musician working in the same vein as Eno. Wobble beefs up Eno's initial textures, adds drums, bass, and guitar, and generally makes the music a little less pastoral.

The album slyly builds in much the same way as Wobble built on Eno's music: from the opening "Where We Lived," so typical of Eno that one begins to suspect a self-parody; to the smouldering cauldron of "Unusual Balance," a mixture of such ingredients as aggressive funk, ambient/trance, and Eno's own delicate noodlings, that becomes a heaving mass of utterly hypnotic sound.

On the down side, there's nothing here that Eno hasn't done better before, and the second half of the album falls prey to repetition. Well before the last track you find yourself reaching for the stop button on the CD player. Keep listening after that last track though. Eno, being as obtuse as he is, has included one of those "bonus tracks."

This album is not Eno's best work by a long shot. But for the Eno neophyte, I would still heartily recommend that you climb aboard Eno's caravan to the outer limits of modern rock. Don't forget to write.

IAN DAWE

Gilt

Machines of Loving Grace
Mammoth

This is uninspired crap. It's very predictable, noisy, guitar-heavy, quasi-alternative diarrhea.

After listening to it a few times — not something I recommend — I'm going through once again and...nope, there's nothing interesting here. Listening to it now is an exercise in listening to the first 30 seconds of a song and then hitting the next track button.

In an odd way, they sound like really bad Suicidal Tendencies in places. "Tryst" has that sound. Half-baked trebly music with very annoying "angry at the world" vocals which fade in with a "whoosh."

Machines of Loving Grace try a lot of interesting things on *Gilt*, but they fail at every step. There's some media and guitar sampling, and sequenced keyboard noise for that "industrial" edge. The problem is that it doesn't work because all of it is very weak. MLG aren't pushing any of these elements to a point where they gel with the music. Instead they — and the playing — come across as weak and contrived.

MIKE GRAHAM

No Joke!
Meat Puppets

Cris and Curt Kirkwood have released their follow-up to last year's *Too High Too Die* to a lot more fanfare than they must be used to. This is due in part to their appearance on Nirvana's Unplugged show — where they were invited onstage to back up Nirvana in covering three of their songs — and to their unique and proliferative songwriting ability. The Meat Puppets have the ability to express a unique form of human suffering to which everyone, at one point in their lives, is able to relate. As well, their songs have the ability to tell stories on many levels, their lyrics mimicking the styles of myths or legends — stories with a deeper meaning, stories that teach. *No Joke!* continues in this vein of storytelling, adding modern twists to these old tales.

Musically, there is nothing new here. *No Joke!* is very similar to its predecessor, and varies very little from song to song. Perhaps this reflects the more "folky" songwriting nature of the Puppets. I get the feeling that everything could be told with only an acoustic guitar, and perhaps the transition to electric is not as appropriate in this case (...it would be interesting to know if they write on an acoustic).

Overall, what we have here is a follow-up album. Very similar in style and content to *Too High Too Die*, *No Joke!* gives me the feeling that it was written at the same time, or perhaps on their last tour. If you liked the Meat Puppets' last record, then pick this one up. If you're unsure, borrow it first.

PETER BROWN

Southpaw Grammar
Morrissey
Sire/Reprise

Back with his sixth North American release, and third collaboration with Boz Bozer and Alain Whyte, Morrissey has provided us with a tour-charged mix that transcends all previous post-Marr work. Named after a supposed school for left-handed boxers, *Southpaw Grammar* is more of a band effort than simply Morrissey alone. As the fourth release from the group in as many years, this album is the culmination of four years of touring and collaborating.

Don't let the eight track listing fool you. This is a full length effort where "the band" finds a happy medium between the rockabilly foundation of *Your Arsenal* and the Smithsesque pop of *Vauxhal* and *I*, funnelling the combination through the raw energy of their live performance (as documented on "Beethoven was Deaf"). Recorded fresh off the last tour, *Southpaw Grammar* can't help but speed along. It's fuelled by the onstage energy and sweat of the past years, complete with drum solos (two minutes worth in "The Operation") and instrumentals that speed the album by, as if it was a live recording.

What Morrissey album would be complete without a dose of miserable emotion? There's fear

("Daghanem Dave"), jealousy ("Best Friend on the Payroll"), envy...you name it, it's there.

In the eleven-minute opening track, "The Teachers are Afraid of the Pupils," Morrissey takes a haunting look at "Another Brick in the Wall" from the teacher's perspective. Musically, its orchestral build-up and feedback-guitar body give a slick introduction of what's to come in the next seven tracks. From there, it just pounds through with energy alone, making the album more rewarding if you listen to it in its entirety, not just isolated tracks. You are brought down gently by the closing track "Southpaw" and its seven-minute instrumental, leaving you drained as if you had just seen a live show.

Overall, this is one of Morrissey's best efforts to date, and the band's most collaborative, well-rounded performance as a unit. Don't expect the polished production of Vauxhal (or any Smiths album) or the completely raw fire of "Beethoven." Just be prepared for the post-tour energy of Morrissey.

PETER BROWN

Sacrifice
Motörhead
MCA

"This is a very good album. Yes friends, get a copy of *Sacrifice* and hordes of huge naked women/men/goats will come round to your house and rub themselves all over you in the nicest possible, non-role model, respectful way." — Lemmy

I guess that review copies don't count, but I have a soft spot for this unlauted band anyway. I have memories of Laurie Brown hosting the Power Hour and throwing to "Ace of Spades" with Lemmy crooning into a microphone at his signature placement of "way too high."

It's great to know that about 15 years after creating some of metal's finest masterpieces, Motörhead are still rocking out as hard and heavy as ever. *Sacrifice* is a grrreat album. Lemmy's pure-crud vocals are beautiful and the band (which seems to be changing members monthly) really pounds out the hard-hitting tunes. No filler here. Every song smokes. It's the kind of stuff that reveals bands like Megadeth as the posturing, whiny purveyors of crap that they are. Motörhead are the real thing. What I'd give to see Lemmy put the boots to Dave Mustaine...but I digress.

MIKE GRAHAM

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your tail!



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