

be so quick to condemn a band whose lyrics I cannot sing — I'm sure my friends will thank me!

KATHARINE DUNN



Where's the Bone
The Pursuit of Happiness

Before I slam The Pursuit Of Happiness' new cd, let me just say that I was a fan. I loved their first release *Love Junk*, in fact, I still listen to the thing. Who knew that instead of getting progressively better they could get exponentially worse.

To put it mildly, *Where's the Bone* chews!

I cringed through its entirety as Moe scratched his vocals down my chalkboard. His voice has become a twangy, nasally irritation. If the lyrics were left to stand on their own I could handle it, but that would be poetry and this is supposed to be rock music. I hate all the tracks with the exception of two. Or three. The music in "Glamorous Death" rocks but it's glamorous deathly the moment Moe begins to sing.

You have probably already heard the track "White Man" as it has been released on some compilations. I admit I like the song; Moe's talent as a songwriter gets to shine through with lines like, "We dig Chinese call girls and black street ladies but we marry chicks like Kathie Lee and Marcia Brady." But then, considering all the shit it's sandwiched between, it's hard to judge.

I'll no longer mention "Wayne Gretzky Rocks". It's a boppy party tune about the great Wayne Gretzky and Moe's ability to acknowledge the player's talents even though he likes the Hawks. He raps badly but then I guess that was the point. Besides, it was a nice break from his singing voice.

So let me recap in case you missed the point. This is banality and mediocrity packaged with poor attempts at musicianship. Just listen to *Love Junk* and deny that they ever released anything after...that's what I'm going to do.

KATRINA HAWCO

Dear You
Jawbreaker
Geffen

Any of you who picked up a copy of CKDU's free CD in September will recognize "Fireman," Jawbreaker's first release off of *Dear*

You.. This new alternative group looks like they should do well with this CD. The music is definitely in the moderate range, somewhere between Offspring and the Wonderstuff, with an easygoing feel throughout.

This CD is pretty much filled with the angst typical of our end-of-the-millennium generation, about relationships, self-destruction, and futility. But this is not meaningless whining: "I have a present: it is the present... If you could save yourself, you could save us all..." The lyrics are pretty decent and the music is solid.

My favorites from this disc include "Fireman," which is playing in froshpacks all over campus, and "Oyster," for its mellow tune and metaphoric message: "The world is an oyster, locked in a shell. You like the taste of it but can't take the smell..." Perhaps not a biologically sound metaphor, but this is art, not marine bio 2001.

The trio is made up of Blake Schwarzenbach as their "gutter and gusher," Chris Bauermeister playing on "Great big ukulele," and Adam Pfahler on "thwack." I think that roughly translates to bass, voice, guitar, and drums, but I can't be sure.

This is a good listen and doesn't become annoying after the first fifty times, so I recommend you check this disc out. Watch for the tunes "Million," "Bad Scene," "Everyone's Fault," and "Accident Prone." If you dig "Fireman," you'll enjoy the rest of *Dear You..*

MATEO YORKE



Birthday Boy
Junkhouse

When I first heard Junkhouse's "Praying for the rain" on Muchmusic's videoflow, I for some reason assumed that they were something akin to a country-rock band, like Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Eagles, or the more recent Blue Rodeo. Maybe it had something to do with all those acoustics they were carrying around with them. Well, I'm glad to say I was completely and utterly proved wrong (I'm no fan of country-rock). Junkhouse knows how to ROCK, and they know how to rock hard.

The best songs on *Birthday Boy* are the ones that utilize the band's ability to offer crunching guitars, fast rhythms, and excel-

lent distortion/flanging/phasing effects. Unfortunately, what becomes all too apparent later in the album is the fact that Junkhouse's attempts at slower, more easy-listening songs are mediocre at best.

The album kicks off well enough, with the track "Chunk (Port Dover)." This is a relatively slow rocker with an awesome bassline. It also gives a glimpse of what I would guess to be something of a Junkhouse trademark — unconnected guitar effects running through the verse.

Somewhere around the middle though, the album really takes off, providing two excellent back-to-back tracks — "Burn For You" and "Be Someone." "Be Someone" has received some airplay on the radio, but I thought "Burn For You" was the better of the two. It just plods along with a real nasty dark edge to it; it's probably the best song on the album. "Be Someone" also has merit — its opening riff takes you right in.

From there, however, the listener is taken for a short lesson on the band's current limits. "Burned-Out Car," a duet with Sarah McLaughlan, only showed me how much better the song would have turned out if it had been done by just McLaughlan. By the time we get to "Drink," a slow and dragging number, it's apparent that Tom Wilson, the lead vocalist and writer, could make a living by imitating Leonard Cohen if he really tried. Such songs more or less dominate the album's second half.

Still, even though Wilson's voice proves to be the major difficulty in "Car" and "Drink," it's his middle class, blue-collar lyrics that give Junkhouse their drive and the band's personality. Without his persona, a lot of the attitude that make up the songs would no doubt disappear, and it's this energy that bands like Junkhouse thrive on, drawing from the emotions expressed in the lyrics as well as in the music.

Birthday Boy is a good album, but it's not a great album. This second release is not going to hurl them to the status of The Tragically Hip, but it will go a long way in paving the road for them to possibly someday reach that level. As is, Junkhouse remains one of Canada's premier rock bands, and *Birthday Boy* is a good, solid testament against those that would dispute that fact.

BRANDON BUTLER

Washing Machine
Sonic Youth
Geffen

For the last three years my friend J. and I have been worried about Sonic Youth.

During the eighties, this New York quartet was responsible for some of the most ground-break-

ing music in modern rock. With their overtones, atypical tunings, and feedback, Sonic Youth's musical premise was exhilarating: the concept of noise as music. As the band evolved, the music became less chaotic and more formulized. However, these formulas only helped the band, as they went on to produce fresh music within the confines of traditional structures. Lyrically, the band explored various ideas such as the writings of Philip K. Dick, the schizophrenic experience, sci-fi, and religion. All of this was done with lyrics that only hinted at tangible realities, never hitting you over the head, but always brilliantly describing sensations that seemed indescribable: "We make up what we can't hear" ("Eric's Trip" from 1988's *Daydream Nation*).

The standard set by this band has been high, and perhaps that's why J. and I have had problems with the Youth's last two discs. 1992's *Dirty* seemed produced to match the sound of certain other bands that were at the forefront of alternative rock at the time, and the band's politics became way too obvious.

How much more blunt can you get than "I believe Anita Hill" ("Youth Against Fascism"). Also, while 1994's *Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star* was supposed to be a return to the days of *Sister*, it simply wasn't nearly as good. Both albums were better than those of most other bands, but compared to the Youth's earlier work they were disappointing.

With Sonic Youth's new album, *Washing Machine*, I can happily say that J. and I can quit worrying about when the next brilliant Sonic Youth disc will come out. Without doubt, this is the strongest offering from the band since 1990's *Go*.

Musically, *W.M.* still contains the waves of feedback that characterized the band's earlier albums, but also concentrates on the more ethereal aspects of the Youth's music. This is exemplified by the beautiful lullaby "Unwind," and the slightly bizarre coming-of-age tale "Little Trouble Girl".

The new disc also has Lee Ranaldo doing his best storytelling in a long time, with his cynical portrayal of contemporary alternative-rock music, "Skip Tracer" ("...she showed up too drunk to do the show...we watched her fall over and lay down, shouting the poetic truths" of the new school journal keepers").

The new disc succeeds in taking the more positive elements of Sonic Youth's latest albums and combining them with the musical brilliance of albums such as *Daydream Nation*. Thus, *W.M.* doesn't really break any new ground, but is representative of some of Sonic Youth's best work.

AARON DHIR

Life of Agony
Ugly From A Previous Life
Roadrunner/Attic

When I first listened to Life Of Agony, I was less than enthusiastic about reviewing them because at first glance, they seemed to be almost bereft of any variety in time, pitch, or style. And, for a band that puts all of its guitars through at least two sets of effects pedals, a lack of variety is inexcusable and unacceptable.

A noted composer whose name I forget at the moment once said "Music is the space between the notes." It was this statement that started me on the idea that perhaps music is about differences and patterns. *Ugly From A Previous Life* churns and chews its way through the best part of an hour with a driving aggressive pace. There are not a lot of changes or spaces in this album and it is not designed to be appreciated by music aficionados.

When I came home after a long day (and nearly being run off the road by a near-blind motorist), I walked in and hit play on my stereo, not really caring what was in it. I thought I just wanted music. As it turned out, I was looking for something — I was looking that I needed. Life of Agony took all my frustration and rage and railed against some in explicable oppression that I had been feeling. They got me out of the dumps and back on my feet. Although they may not be intellectually fascinating, music should feed more than just the brain.

JAMES BEDDINGTON

Varga
Oxygen
BMG

In returning to writing after the summer, I could not completely lose the chip on my shoulder for music industry puppets. I admit it — I have it in for corporate-corpuses types. Varga is the first Canadian band I have seen to subjugate themselves so thoroughly.

The "alternative" fourpiece are from Hamilton, Ontario (funny that no one in the alternative scene in that area knows who they are, at least not the independent and underground scenes there. Maybe they're big with the corporate alternative scene — fortysomethings "moshing" in three piece suits).

Anyways, I'm ranting (and foaming at the mouth). The bio of these four young career-oriented types says that they come from a town where toxic smoke billows into the air (my, how Blade Runner). If it does, it comes from the corporate infrastructure they work for.

What I think seems to be clear, so as to not get bitter, I'm going to go listen to something I like and put Varga and *Oxygen* deprivation out of my mind.

JAMES BEDDINGTON

SOCIOLOGY 10th @ 9:30pm RM 223 Tracey 248-2583

69% of people 19-24 say next days activities impact how much they drink

Current trends show more people RESPONSIBLE re: drinking and driving

57% of people 19-24 feel comfortable telling friends to STOP when they've had too much to drink.

100% of my time will be planning Friday's frat party Another 100% to Tracey

54% of people 19-24 always know how much they've had to drink

Designated Driver idea took hold in 80's. Today is very popular.

KNOW WHEN TO DRAW THE LINE

Labatt