

similar video). The rest of the album consists of borderline funk ("Quit playing games (with my heart)"), 80s-style pop ("Boys will be boys") and gut wrenching, get-out-of-my-way-I-have-to-throw-up-NOW ballads ("I'll never break your heart" and "Just to be close to you").

Overall, *Backstreet Boys* isn't a bad album, if you like their sort of thing. Apparently, they've taken over Europe, no doubt consoling broken-hearted Take That groupies, and have returned to North America to mass pre-teen hysteria. Hurrah, Henry.

You have two options. You can pretend that you don't mind them or you can weep into your beer until it's all over.

EUGENIA BAYADA

Enigma
Keith Murray
Jive

The feeling I get every time I finish listening to Keith Murray's sophomore album *Enigma* is that I've heard it all before.

At times, familiarity is in fact the intention. Such is the case with the recognizable samples and also with the choruses built around some of Keith's lines from previously-released songs (i.e. "My style is all that and a big bag of chips with the dip"). But even these do not have the same effect they did the first go around. Then, at other times throughout the album — such as when you hear lyrics you've heard before or worse yet, tired, recycled concepts (such as his willingness to get physical with anyone who steps to him) — one can't help but miss the creativity and the freshness Keith Murray once possessed.

One might also miss Keith's unmatched lexicon that he flaunted on his last album, but it is not seen on *Enigma* for

the most part. He still manages to hold the album together, however, and this is a tribute to his technical growth as an MC. He's curbed his tendencies to go off beat, while still utilizing his instantly recognizable voice to his advantage whenever possible.

While almost all the choruses are based on Keith chanting, some work, others don't, and still others baffle the hell out of me. For example, the chorus on his first single, "The Rhyme": "I keep it jiggy jiggy jiggy jiggy / We keep it wiggy wiggy wiggy wiggy".

The production is handled for the most part by funklord Erick Sermon, and — as usual — every song is laden with funk beats, which get a bit tired after all these years. Even with the programmed beats (yet another detraction) the songs sound like what you would expect, in large part because of Erick's experience.

It's not that Keith Murray (or for that matter, Erick Sermon as a producer) has necessarily fallen off, but they've failed to exceed themselves once again. This hurts their credibility in the eyes of any demanding hip hop fan, and probably has them desiring the exuberance and style people first caught a glimpse of a few years back.

SOHRAB FARID

Kafka
Nigel Kennedy
EMI

Nigel Kennedy, one of the most prominent classical violinists, rose to superstardom when he released his interpretation of Vivaldi's *Il Quatro Stagioni* in his teens. In the few years since, he has released many more interpretations. *Kafka* is the first album on which Kennedy is releasing his own compositions.

Tracks like "Autumn Regrets" and "I believe in God" show strong rock elements (Kennedy has been outraging the British concert-going public for years with his onstage Monsters of Rock-style antics). Yet the gorgeous "Melody in the Wind" shows that Kennedy has maintained his classical influences.

Kafka does not only consist of instrumentals. "Transfigured Night" and "From Adam to Eve" have alto Davis Roscarrick-Wholley supplying voice. The latter also has Brix E. Smith and Stephen Duffy (of "Kiss Me" one-hit-wonder fame) on backing vocals and has rock opera potential and magnitude.

Kennedy covers a number of styles, both classical and contemporary. Admittedly, *Kafka* is a bit of a "grower", but overall it is a really good buy and well worth a listen.

EUGENIA BAYADA

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