

ARTS

Bossanova grinds bastards into Pixie dust

by "Switch"

The Pixies
Bossanova
Vertigo/4AD Records

For a band that worked its way up through college radio to hit the big time charts, The Pixies have accomplished a lot in a short time. Their newest release, *Bossanova*, has met with much criticism from the fans of last year's (their first release) *Doolittle*. I advise you

not to listen to them and listen to *Bossanova* with your copy of their first album filed safely away under "P" for at least 24 hrs.

The bastards who often review records have the terrible habit of tying bands to their first releases and not allowing them to experiment or "improve their sound" by giving them horrendous reviews on subsequent releases.

As my Daddy tells me "Illegitimus non carborundum" (as in

don't be lead down the poverbial path to rock elitism).

I've always believed the best way to review an album is to listen to it and not constantly compare it to other work by the same band. I mean an album has to stand on its own merit or its not worth the money — right?

I don't care whether the band is #1 nationally or if it's #277 on a local radio chart in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. If it's good it's good and

if it's bad then don't torture yourself by buying it.

OK, *Bossanova*, is not *Doolittle*. Have I got that clear? They are two different albums!

Bossanova's merits are numerous. The album is incredibly cohesive even though there are a lot of different sounds involved. The Pixies explore the harder side of their sound in "Rock Music" and then offset it with the slow almost anthem-like qualities of "Velouria" (the single and also the name of the EP which preceded the album).

But by far the most listenable cuts (as in you can sing them, hum them & drive your friends insane by playing them over and over) are "Digging for Fire" and "Is She Weird?" The track "The Happening" is a mix of surf-punk and twang guitar. It's a really strange cut which reminds me of a cross between The Cramps and some twisted nursery rhyme.

For the lovers of kick-ass bass and excellent guitar riffs (check out the track "Hang Wire"), the Pixies come through. Certainly *Bossanova* won't disappoint you.

The Pixies manage to combine the 50s the 60s. Surf-punk, hardcore, Top40 and Anthem/Ballad music on one album, make it unique and invariably — The Pixies. (Check out the awesome cover of Surftones' "Cecilia Ann")

Don't let the other critics persuade you that The Pixies are losing it. *Bossanova* is more produced than *Doolittle* but it's not even close to dead.

Gil Norton (the producer) refined The Pixies' sound and didn't destroy it. There is no doubt that Black Francis (the lead singer) is a sort of god. I mean, (and be honest) how many bands can you count that play rock with a 60s type flair or hardcore bands that don't sound generic?

Be true to yourself, go out and buy *Bossanova* and remember "Don't let the bastards grind you down"

Book fair offers few deals

by Howard Kaman

Last Sunday, Toronto enjoyed its first annual outdoor book festival. *The Word On The Street*, sponsored by the *Toronto Star*, 100 booths, representing publishers and booksellers all over the city, were set up on Queen Street West, filling the stretch between John Street and Spadina Avenue.

The festival was an definite success, as thousands of people showed up to peruse the exhibits. But, what was the point?

Supposedly, *The Word On The Street* was created to promote literacy, and to promote reading as a popular pastime. This is an admirable goal, but it probably wasn't fulfilled. Rather, the show "preached to the converted," as thousands of bookworms crowded the streets looking for deals.

Of course, they couldn't find any. There were three or four booths sponsored by Coles, for example — a few tables of the same books available in the stores, at exactly the same prices; hardcover bestsellers retailing for \$25 when they cost pennies for the publisher to print.

The mass greed of the book industry was evident through the festival. W.H. Smith had its own booth, very similar to what Coles had to offer. In addition, more than a dozen publishers, from McClelland and Stewart to University of Toronto Press, had booths touting their new and upcoming releases.

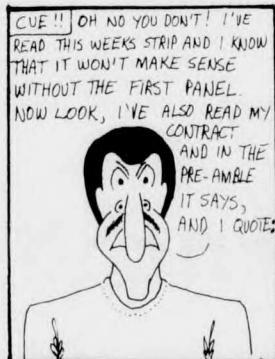
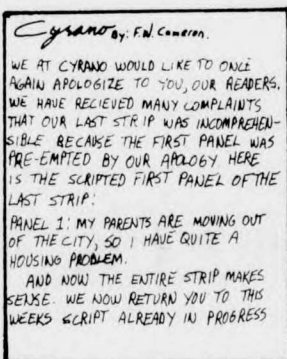
The whole show, save a small stretch of Soho Street labeled Fringe Beat and filled with a dozen independent small presses, smacked of commerciality, right down to the booth advertising one of the festival's main sponsors, *Metropolis* magazine. It is only natural that a magazine founded on the principles of corporate sponsorship (with backers ranging from Labatt's to Pizza Pizza) bring such a tacky display to the streets of Toronto.

Of course, it wasn't all bad. There were free giveaways and author signings. But they all seemed a part of some big marketing ploy, rather than sincere attempts to promote literacy.

This is, perhaps why Fringe Beat was the most enjoyable aspect of the show. It is always

nice to see artists come out of their shells, and show some pride in their product. As most small press authors publish their own work, their pride shows with every sale. Not wanting to bother with the hypocrisy and bureaucracy of the industry they have carved their own niche, and a fine one at that.

Besides, their stretch of the street was relatively quiet. It was the only part of the show that retained the true charm of book shopping, the serenity and peace that most bookworms relish. While the crowds throughout most of the fair made browsing difficult, a select few were indulging in works on the Fringe.



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