

REVIEWS & SPEWS

Watering Hole Frequency
Various Artists
Ant Records

For the last couple of months my friend J. and I have been worried about Ant Records.

During the last two years, this Truro-based indie record label has been responsible for some of the most ground-breaking music in Canada... well, Nova Scotia... ok, Truro. Recently, however, it seemed as if Ant had gone soft. With the Motes contributing to the soundtrack of Melrose Place, Sixtoo's guest appearance on 90210... it all seemed a bit much. With the new Ant compilation, however, both J. and I can breathe a sigh of relief. Although Ant claims to be "waterproof" and "sugar-free," it certainly isn't "talentless."

It's funny, every time I read a review of the Motes — one of the more well-known bands on this compilation — they're always compared to Pavement. But lately, every time I listen to Pavement, they sound like the Motes. Every time I listen to Guided by Voices, they sound more like the Motes. Every time I listen to the Jackson 5... well, not exactly. Anyways, in short, the Motes' tune on the compilation is extremely good.

Ultimately, with the exception of a couple of weak tracks, *Watering Hole Frequency* as a whole is a great collection of songs, all recorded on 4-track. Especially compelling is the surf-rock of the Kooks, which features a crazy-ass vibraphone (or keyboard that sounds vibraphone) part, and the hip-hop of Sixtoo. Sixtoo's "The Day Has Come" is probably the

song that I like the most on this compilation...it has a great groove in a really spooky way, both musically and lyrically: "My position during daybreak is fetal, my position when the sun goes down is lethal."

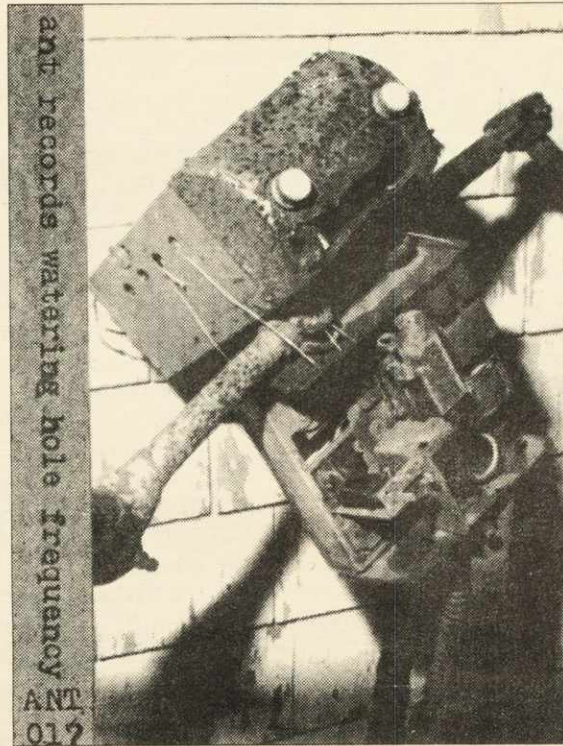
Whatever your position may be, *W.H.F.* features bands of many genres. From the straight-ahead punk-rock of Blunderpuss to the bluesy acoustic tune by Mardel, this compilation is truly worth having. It's also worth it to check out the first Ant compilation called *Ant Records Watering Hole Frequency*, which has some bands not featured on *W.H.F.*

W.H.F. is available from Sam's Barrington, or write to: Ant Records, 93 Normandy Ave., Truro N.S., B2N 3J6

AARON DHIR

Crank
Barstool Prophets
Mercury/Polydor

Now, I don't want to pigeonhole the Canadian bar music scene, but here's what I think about your average Canadian band. Why can you listen to a song for the first two minutes and think,



"Hmmm...are these guys Canadian?" Well, that was the second thing I thought after listening to the opening track on the Barstool Prophets debut *Crank*. The first thing? "This is kinda good." It stopped there, though.

This four piece comes out of Ontario providing music typical of *She Stole My Beer* or *Barney Bentall*. Not a real heavy guitar set, more well-balanced with nothing particular standing out. Musically, I would have to say that they are a solid band, and are probably much better live. Lyrically, their name says it all. Picture the stereotype: alone in a bar, drink in front of him, thinking about old friends, girlfriends, parents, being alone ("This life has got us firmly by the short and curlies"). Overall, it's a somewhat bleak look at life, but one that a lot of people can relate to at one time or another.

Nothing exciting here. If you like *Barney Bentall*, *The Tragically Hip*, *Tom Cochrane*, etc., you will probably like *Crank*, but maybe you should wait until you see them at the Grawood!

PETER BROWN

Just To Let You Know...
Bitty Maclean
(Virgin)

Just To Let You Know... is irritating. Not just a little bit, but considerably so.

Bitty 'Del' Maclean is ridiculously happy throughout this entire CD, whether he's warbling about being alone on "Here I Stand" or being chucked on "What Goes Round (Comes Around)." Whoever it is he's singing about has got a point — if he was near me, I'd chuck him and run, too.

'Del' attempts to be soulful on "Stop This World" but something about his voice mocks the whole feel of the song. Maybe because it's twangy and annoying.

The success of 'Del's' debut single, "(It keeps) Rainin," could somehow be justified; however, some moron decided to milk it for all it's worth.

I suppose *Just To Let You Know...* isn't bad if you like reggae and overly happy music. Why doesn't someone just give our 'Del' a downer so he can go back to his old job of making tea for UB40 in Birmingham?

EUGENIA BAYADA

Telecommunication Breakdown
Electronic Broadcast Network
TVT/Cargo

As media manipulators, EBN are very good. You might know them from the work they did with U2 involving the walls of monitors blasting audiences with almost random images and words, or from their videos which include "We will Rock You" which featured George Bush and Bill Clinton providing the vocals via word sampling.

One of the primary aims of EBN is to play with the attention deficits that most of us have, not by slowing down edits, but by completely bombarding your eyes and ears with so much (dis)information that it becomes impossible to digest anything you see or hear. At this point, you enter a higher level of consciousness which leads to easy persuasion. Or so they'd have you believe.

The enhanced cd would seem to be the perfect way to put across EBN's media sampling art. If you've got a computer with a cd-rom drive, you can slap in the cd and ingest three full-length videos and information through a haphazard interface of a 4x4 video wall.

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