

Sweeper Don't Clean My Street
Reg E. Gaines
Mercury/Polygram

Spoken Word is not the first section of a CD store I visit, but I've wanted to get a feel for this music genre nouveau for quite some time. There would have to be no better place to start than Reg E. Gaines' second release *sweeper don't clean my street*.

This is a great introduction to spoken word because it offers one established poet's experience and his wide variety of style. No two tracks on this disc are quite alike. The works included focus more on Gaines' personal experience and deeper feelings, than on pure observation and commentary. We are given a close and personal look at Gaines' feelings about racism, equality, discrimination, and the daily life of a black man in our times.

Three tracks in particular caught me. "Pipe Dream" was the first piece of spoken word I'd heard. This was certainly not Leonard Cohen. Gaines' voice was intense, excited, and almost dreamlike as he described smoke rising and falling and fading from a pipe.

"Notes of a Nazi Son" stabbed right to the heart of the insanity and the ravings of the extreme right white youth in America. Gaines' interpretation of the hatred and the racism bottled up inside the indoctrination is first rate. Gaines does not have to say anywhere in the piece that he feels this is wrong or bad, but his voice creates an atmosphere of confusion and hysteria that is compelling. His disdain is mixed with what may be sympathetic understanding of the brainwashed.

The third and perhaps most catchy piece is called "Cab (I just wanna catch a cab)." This piece features the rapper/actress Nefertiti. This is where music and word mix best producing an up-



beat story of the hardship of being black and trying to catch a cab back to Brooklyn, a place most New York cabbies are unwilling to go. This piece will be one that may put Gaines in the public spotlight; it is not quite so foreign to the ear as traditional spoken word.

I really enjoyed this disc but I will warn you: Spoken word is not simple background music or party music. It is something that requires aggressive and active listening. When you have the time, pop this one in, and listen...

MATEO YORKE

Adults Only
Club 69
Tribal/IRS/EMI

Club 69 are Austria's biggest music success since Falco...which is pretty self-explanatory, really. Are these people serious?! I hope not.

This is an interesting novelty album. It mixes disco with one (yes, the same one throughout) classic house beat and that irritating housey-housey piano riff. This is a great CD if you've had so much to drink that you're practically pickled.

With tracks like "Let Me Be Your Underwear," "Sugar Pie Guy," and "Riding Into Battle With Her High Heels On," there isn't a single good reason to buy this album. Unless, of course, you wear white stilettos, carry a handbag that you dance around and possess at least one fright wig. Judging by current sales of this CD, there must be a lot of you. That is a very scary thought.

In short, the music is borderline rubbish but the guy on the cover has got a really nice, tight arse...

EUGENIA BAYADA

Fashionably Lame
Lizard Music

True North/World Domination/MCA

This CD is a mixture of at least five different styles of music, including rock, folk, and Beach Boys sound-a-likes. The strange thing is that it works.

Good music, good lyrics, great song titles — "She's A Very Very Fat Fat Weirdo," "Going Back To Orangeland," and "The Frugal Lamé," amongst others — make for a good, very listenable CD.

Lizard Music, however, would probably be a bigger success and make a lot more money selling whatever it is they're on.

EUGENIA BAYADA

Presidents of the United States of America
Columbia

The inaugural address of the Presidents of the United States of America heralds a fresh and welcome change from the typical Seattle-brand of melancholic, formula rock.

The release (a remastered version of their indie debut) features thirteen energetic tracks ranging from foot-stomping, knee-slapping hillbilly ("Back Porch") to the guitar-driven "Lump," currently given light rotation on Q104. The versatility of the Presidents' music allows a variety of comparison — there is some heavy, Primus-sounding

bass, another is folky comme les Violent Femmes, and yet another is reminiscent of Killdozer. But please, I mention this due to limitations of describing music with paper and ink and by no means to tag the Presidents' sound — they are truly originals.

The Presidents — Chris Ballew, Dave Dederer, and Jason Finn — get their message to the people with only five strings (a three-string guitar and two-string bass) and one drum between them.

"We are entertainers, not artists," quips President Dave.

Add to this a populist sentiment and you get a broad-based platform of rock and roll, having fun, and, as on "Naked and Famous," clothes are optional.

The band just finished a ten day tour, playing eight shows in the south-western U.S. Their campaign trail takes them to Canada this winter and I hope they come here. In the meantime, I strongly recommend to all constituents to hear the Presidents' message!

LEN DELICAET



Kultura
The Ukrainians
Cooking Vinyl

Although I'm not good at it, I love singing along with music — it is very cathartic. For this reason, I find foreign music irritating because of its unintelligible

lyrics. However, I could not resist the album *Kultura* by The Ukrainians when I saw that they covered The Smiths — one of my favourite groups — in Russian!

In an attempt to gain an international audience, the six member West Yorkshire, England-based band have graciously translated most of their Russian songs into one of either English, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, or Japanese on the inside cover.

Musically, The Ukrainians have a definite traditional eastern European feel — accordions and mandolins are prevalent in most songs. (The Russian lyrics might have something to do with that!). But the catchy tunes and buoyant rock sound bring the band into the nineties. They credit the Sex Pistols for influence, without whom the "...band would not exist."

The band's cutting lyrics make statements about present-day life in an eastern Europe without communism. "Ukraine-America" celebrates American culture and democracy and their immense impact in the Ukraine. In "Glory," the lead singer's resonant and hypnotic voice, backed by rich guitars and a strong, methodical drum beat, sings of broken promises as workers are compared to "poor camels." Powerful stuff.

Not surprising is the fact that The Ukrainians decided to cover The Smiths, great social and political satirists in their own right. With the upbeat sound of mandolins, The Ukrainians gives a magnificent twist to the mellow and admittedly downright depressing originals. Although they are sung in Russian, the resemblance of the lead singer's voice to Morrissey's whiny tone is unmistakable and gives the songs much credibility.

My own political ignorance notwithstanding, I am taken with this band. They are intelligent and original. From now on I will not

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