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**Clumsy**  
*Our Lady Peace*  
 Columbia

This follow-up release to *Our Lady Peace's Naveed* is loaded with driving guitars and fast drum beats.

While most of the songs on *Clumsy* are filled with sentiments of disillusionment and alienation, the best songs are those which are introspective and question our society and our own actions. "Su-



clearly. Also, the music seems to be a good fit for Maida's voice. Although lacking in classic fundamentals, Maida's voice rings with sheer intensity, and it isn't a grating voice, which seems to be the in-style sound of other so-called "intense" singers. In his voice one

should help *Our Lady Peace* duplicate the success of *Naveed*.

**GREG MCFARLANE**

**Backstreet Boys**  
*Backstreet Boys*  
 Jive/BMG

Yet another set of New Kids clones have taken centre stage in the fickle world of teeny-bop pop.

The Backstreet Boys have been carefully marketed to fill the void and then some. They're all good-looking (there are no "Dannys" in this group) and yes, they can sing — no one has an embarrassingly-high voice. But the music itself, let's face it, is more than a



little crap.

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few months, you've heard the infectious "Get Down" (thank you, Boys, but I'd rather eat my own earlobes) or "We've got it going on" (the "Hangin' Tough" of the 90s, complete with a disturbingly

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perman's Dead", the opener, falls into the latter category. It explores the insecurity that one feels when under the glare of others, and how one can feel that he/she does not measure up to expected standards. Raine Maida (lead vocals), who wrote all of the lyrics on *Clumsy*, makes this theme obvious: "An ordinary girl an ordinary waist / But ordinary's just not good enough today."

"Clumsy", the most radio-friendly track on the disc, is a song about watching someone self-destruct (possibly due to substance abuse), and the frustration of not being able to help that person.

Musically, *Our Lady Peace* excels at creating the right type of music to fit the particular mood of a song. The band never seems lost or out of place, and this helps to convey their message more

finds purpose, although he does go a little over the top on some selections.

The overall sound of the CD is mostly hard, fast, and dark, but OLP changes the mood and tempo on songs like "4am" which require less accusations and more understanding. Most songs are laden with distorted guitars and climactic choruses. For the most part, OLP evades the always lingering trap of slowing their choruses down to a snail's pace, but not entirely. One song, "Car Crash," is forgettable only because the verses don't hold the energy of the chorus.

Although *Clumsy* starts off well, it does not end as well as it might have. That, however, is the only complaint I have with the disc. The entire CD (except for two or three songs) is strong, and

# Participation Required

BY NEAL GRAHAM

On Sunday afternoon I witnessed, and participated in, an unusual musical event. The Saint Mary's Art Gallery, as part of the Halifax Festival of Time-Based Art, hosted a performance of John Cage's style of musical art.

From my perspective it seemed that viewer participation was a necessary element of this abstract composition. Coffee-sipping spectators (the caffeinated juice was free!) quickly became part of the show.

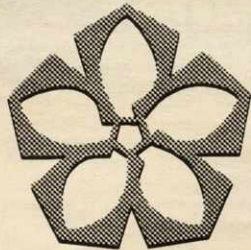
The gallery was wired with strategically placed microphones and amplifiers. Ambient sounds were broadcast around the room overtone by the ranting of a piano, violin, and sampled sound effects. A true multimedia experience was created with the addition of a portable stereo and a

television.

John Cage's work can be described as audio performance art. Sunday's show made artists out of the viewers. The show began with two dozen spectators strolling through the Saint Mary's Art Gallery trying their best to be weird — both for the benefit of the microphones and for themselves — as every person in the room was part of the performance.

John Cage is well known for his 1963 work *Sitting at a piano*. For more than four minutes Cage would sit in front of a piano. The start and close of the piece was signified by the opening and closing of the keyboard cover. Sometimes he would place a microphone against his Adam's apple and drink water for the duration of the performance, never once touching the piano keys.

The quality of each Cage performance depends on the audio offerings of the people who choose to attend. Every aspect of each performance is a unique variation of a theme. The musical performances inspired by John Cage provide for a truly interactive musical experience that can only be understood through participation.



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