

CD REVIEW EXTRAVAGANZA

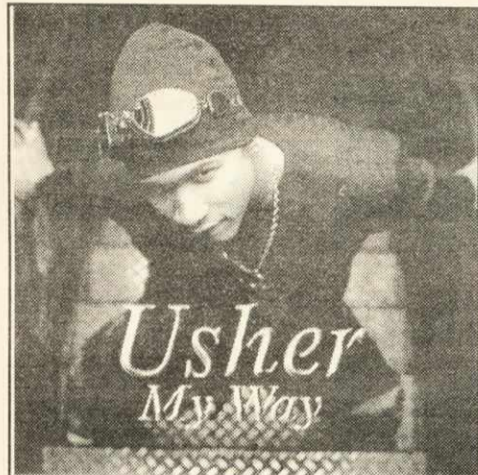
My Way

Usher

LaFace Records/BMG Music
Canada

When I saw the cover of this album, the first thought that came to my mind was 'who the heck is Usher'?

Only later on did I realize that he's the artist behind the smash



R&B jam "You Make Me Wanna". This is one wicked track, and has been backed up by its top-chart status. The thing that I like most about this song is the choice of material. Rather than singing about being dissed by some girl, he's talking about the girl that he accidentally dissed, and how he wants to dis his current girl for her. Most guys like me would have no idea what he's talking about, but prefer to live vicariously through Usher and his song instead. I have no qualms with that, or the word 'dis'.

Surprisingly, this isn't Usher Raymond's first CD, but is actually his sophomore venture. His debut album was simply entitled *Usher* and didn't have nearly the impact as this disc.

The great thing about this CD are the unsung heroes — the producers. You simply can't go wrong when you have top-notch producers like Babyface, L.A. Reid, and Jermaine Dupri (J.D.) doing all the production on an album.

If you're looking for fast party joints, look somewhere else. The fastest song on the disc is 'You Make Me Wanna'. Most of the album is basically either slow jams or mellow grooves. There is a touch of rap here and there featuring Lil' Kim, J.D., and Usher himself.

If you're shopping for a pretty good R&B disc to max, relax, chill, or whatever, this would definitely be my recommendation.

ASHIR SIDDIQUI

The Duran Duran Tribute

Album

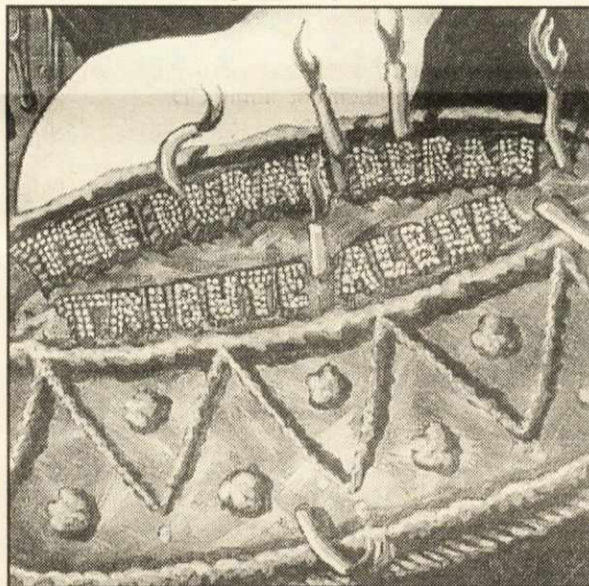
Various Artists
Mojo Records

It's official. My new favourite record company is Mojo Records. Boasting bands like Goldfinger and Reel Big Fish on their label, I figured a tribute album to Duran Duran from this company would have to be interesting. Thankfully, I was not let down.

First off, a little history. Of all of the bands that made their presence known throughout our lifetimes, Duran Duran is one of the bands we loved the most between the ages of 5 and 10. Of course, now they are probably the most embarrassing band to admit having ever liked (with the exception of Wham!).

Well people, be ashamed no more at your hidden love for the 1980s English band that brought us such soul wrenching songs as "The Reflex", "Girls On Film", and "Come Undone" just to name a few.

Looking at the band lineup is enough to make you want to buy the album. Goldfinger, The Deftones, The Mr. T Experience, Reel Big Fish, and GOB., are included. The obvious highlights are an upbeat, cocktail lounge version of "Hungry Like the Wolf" and a driving ska version of "Rio". Unfortunately there isn't much to say about the album other than every band has a great way of



interpreting and rearranging songs that had their heyday in the early 1980s.

Some of the songs have survived relatively well under the new

direction some bands have given them, whereas my reaction to some of the others was, as eloquently put as possible, "What?"



A standard theme followed throughout most of the tribute album is the use of horns to replace some of the synth leads from the original versions, giving the album a bit of a big band feel...as ridiculous as that sounds.

The Duran Duran Tribute Album should be a popular commodity for closet Duran Duran fans and open critics everywhere. The pure entertainment value of seeing which band covers each song is worth any price. Buy it. Go. Right now. Hunt it down and reminisce about times when even Wham! was cool.

JEREMIAH HIERS

B Sides Companion

Ultramagnetic MC's
Universal

Just in time to capitalize on the recent underground and commercial success of member Kool Keith, the Ultramagnetic MC's (Kool Keith, Ced G, T.R. Love and Moe Luv) have 'reunited' in order to release a compilation album. The album is comprised

mostly of remixes and classic Ultra hits, such as "Ego Trippin'" and "Funky", for those familiar with the legendary New York quartet's work, as well as a few b-sides from

days of yore and a solitary 'new' track.

Kool Keith is undoubtedly the premier draw on this album. Since leaving New York and Ultra to join the go-go scene on the west coast, Keith has gained fame and notoriety for his underground work as his many alter egos, including Dr. Octagon, who got picked up by Geffen and has become a commercial success. Also, he is known for his obsession with pornography, which led to the shockingly dirty *Sex Styles* album.

On this album he rejoins his former Ultra friends, who welcome collaborator Spaceman Patterson. Spaceman's production style certainly does not belie his name. Most of the remixes consist of new bass lines and spooky keyboard sounds applied over the original tracks. The unfortunate aspect of this is that Ced G's trademark style of heavy bass and overpowering drums is somewhat dampened, and the songs lack the vitality they had the first go-around.

Nonetheless, the familiar rhyme styles of Kool Keith and Ced G, whose collective influence can be seen even today in anybody from De La Soul to Organized Konfusion, still demand attention

FREE SHIT!

Belvedere Rocks and Millennium Events present... LOCOFEST!

Four shows, all at the Old Via Train Station.

We have five tickets to give away for each of the following shows:

Rusty (with Mir and PF Station), Jan. 28, 7:30pm.

Highland Heights (with Punters and Signal Hill), Jan. 29, 7:30pm.

Rawlins Cross (with Kilt and Fine Crowd), Jan. 30, 7:30pm.

Sandbox (with Grace Babies and Shyne Factory), Jan. 31, 7:30pm.

In order to obtain a free ticket, you must come up to the Gazette office (room 312 SUB) and sing at least a portion of a song performed by one of the above artists.

You need not be a smoker to attend, but you have to be 19!

and respect. The reunion track, aptly titled "Ultra Reunion", proves that neither Keith nor Ced G have lost steps, remarkable in a day when legendary rappers seem to fall off even more with each new release (Q-Tip, Busta, EPMD: this means you). Fans of Ultra should not fear this album as they might other big label releases. Those who have just recently discovered Kool Keith may find his older stuff pleasantly surprising, and may start searching for the originals.

SOHRAB FARID



Halifax

FRIDAY, JAN. 16, 9PM, THE GRAWOOD

Mackeel comes to the Grawood to entertain the crowd with their eclectic version of celtic rock. Not revolutionary, but about as Atlantic Canadian as you can get.

SATURDAY, JAN. 17, 8PM, THE DANSPACE ON GRAFTON

Axis Dance is set to perform. The people behind the performance are trying to start a professional dance company in Halifax, therefore giving some homegrown talent a bigger share of the stage.

SATURDAY, JAN. 17, 9PM, ELECTROPOLIS

Nova Scotia's newest entertainment buzz is surrounding the movie soundstage on Water street. Electropolis has a grand opening, and they really encourage you to dress up as a movie star of your choice. Besides, at \$15 for students, it's not a bad price to pay.

THIS WEEKEND: JAN. 16-18, DUNN THEATRE

The Tibetan Film Festival is showing at the Sir James Dunn Theatre, giving Haligonians a much needed look at the troubles plaguing Tibet after China annexed the country in 1975. It goes to show that you don't need big rock stars to promote a cause.



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