

GENRECIDES

MICHAEL EDWARDS

CHECKING OUT SOME CANCON AND DEATH TO ANNOYING COVER VERSIONS

After the last few weeks my Canadian content must have fallen below the acceptable level, so I will do my best to remedy that this week.

Rose Chronicles
Shiver
(Nettwerk)

Following on from their EP at the end of last year, Vancouver's Rose Chronicles have released a debut album which goes to show just how important Scotland's Cocteau Twins have been in influencing the sound of many bands. Or in other words, this is hardly the most original album I have heard - etherial female vocals over swirling guitars. But that is not necessarily a bad thing because when it is done well, you can almost hear the voices of angels. And for the most part, *Shiver* is a damned fine record with some real joyous moments such as "Dwelling" and "Awaiting Eternity." The combination of Kristy Thirsk's voice and Richard Maranda's guitar can be quite spellbinding as they glide, soar and even (gasp) rock. It does stray a little from this path getting a little self-indulgent in places but nothing too frightening, and thankfully not too often either. If you are a fan of this sound then you will not be dis-

appointed; it should keep you going until the new Lush album this spring.

Mr. Wrong
Mr. Wrong Fights the System
(Wrong Records, P.O. Box 3243, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3Y4)



Ah, the sweet smell of vinyl - nothing else comes close. Mr. Wrong is the evil alter ego of Mr. Right, or rather Mr. Wright who just happens to be the bassist from NoMeansNo, and this 7" is his manifesto to promote his putrid, poisonous view of the world. I realise it doesn't sound like the most cheerful way to spend a few minutes, but trust me, you should really pick this one up as it will make you realise just how much 'fun' the truth can actually be. A wonderfully organic sound of just bass guitar and growled, venomous vocal,

the lead track "State Of Grace" talks of self delusion and futility in a way that helps to put things in perspective. And it has a cool tune too. On the flipside is a cover version of that ol' country favourite "The End Of The World" which is sung with tongue quite firmly in cheek. Simply splendid.

Cover versions. I always have had a soft spot for them, especially the ones that pay homage to the original artists or put a new slant on a song. Take the new album by the Ramones, *Acid Eaters* - a collection of 60's songs that played some part in influencing their sound. So you get some wonderful punk-cum-garage slants on the Stones, Love and even the Byrds. It's quite a wonderful record that oozes respect while still standing up in its own right. These are the sorts of covers that I can cope with. Another band that have been taking songs and doing their own thing is Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine. They normally put a cover version on the B-side of their singles, and have in the past breathed new life into Buzzcocks, Pet Shop Boys, Smiths and Monkees originals. Their versions tend to be a little bit on the more spiky side, but fine interpretations nonetheless. Again, worthwhile.

Which brings me, rather neatly, to my pet peeve of the moment-

the unnecessary cover version. There seems to be a horrid trend at the moment of resurrecting songs and putting out a new version just for the sake of it. Or maybe that should be for the money. You can't help but notice that Celine Dion has had a huge



'hit' of late with "The Power Of Love" which was an equally huge hit back in 1986 for Jennifer Rush. And the difference between the two versions? Well, apart from Celine having a pointier nose (at least in her pre-surgery days), not much. People are just suckers for a slow song. Rod Stewart put out a version of Van Morrison's "Have I Told You Lately" just four years after Van did himself. It was a much poorer version but thanks to a few tears on his Unplugged appearance, it worked its way up the charts. And

that brings me to Mariah Carey whom also milked her Unplugged performance for a rather worthless take on the Jackson Five's "I'll Be There," and now is doing a similar thing with Neillson's "Without You." Both of the songs in question here can be deemed 'classics' (ahem) in their original forms, and really don't need to be dragged through a fence backwards to put some extra cash in the pocket of a 'star' such as Ms. Carey.

And the most frustrating aspect of the whole trend is that the public are buying these new versions - they dominate the airwaves and television. Is the only type of music that people want are new versions of 'safe' old songs that do nothing to promote new talent or take any sort of risks? Sigh. I would really like to think that the answer is no, but I fear that to do so would only be false optimism on my part. In the last year I have seen so much new and genuinely exciting music ignored while Whitney Houston stays at number one for an eternity with a Dolly Parton song that becomes REALLY annoying when played repeatedly very loud at 2 am. Sigh. My faith dwindles...

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