

PETER GABRIEL

Passion

Music From The Last Temptation of Christ (Geffen)

Movie-soundtracks are of two varieties. The most common type released as albums are collections of singles by several artists. Rarely is this type of music targeted specifically at the plot or direction of the film they accompany. Only on their own they usually provide good listening but often seem only a backdrop to the story and are jammed into the picture to fill gaps in dialogue or amplify physical scenes.

The second form of soundtrack is one specifically commissioned to back the screenplay and usually is more instrumental than lyric. Most never seem to get any artistic credit outside of the motion picture industry simply because without the film they hold little power of their own. An exception of course is the Prince Batman album which form is a minor third category, that of pop junk.

The Passion album by Gabriel is a soundtrack of the commissioned instrumental type that reaches above the norm in having an identity of its own.

It's not a typical Gabriel album since it has none of the thoughtful lyrics that one often expects and hopes for in his efforts. Instead it puts Gabriel's talents as a composer to the forefront and, in my humble opinion, proves him to

be what faithful listeners should realize by now, a true artist.

Rarely for me has an album been able to capture the emotion and drama of film and regenerate it with only sound. Gabriel's use of rhythmic drums, classical instrumentation (notably flute and woodwind sounds) and mournful and choral vocals take one back to the original feeling of the setting and story portrayed in the movie. Parts of the album harken back to earlier works such as Rhythm of the Head, Wallflower (which itself played excellently with other songs from the Security album in the score of Birdy), No More Apartheid (from Sun City) and some of the more reflective ballads of the So album. One gets a true sense of purity and, pardon me, spiritualism from this music.

The film has been around long enough that its social complications have waned and perhaps it can be viewed now more abstractly as a piece of creative art which gets wonderful assistance from the music of Peter Gabriel. His Golden Globe for best score was very much deserved. If you happen to catch the film on video, check out the last tune over the closing credits. Gabriel is impressive.

PJ

HARDER THAN YOU 24-7 SPYZ (IN EFFECT)

Almost like an ambitious looney Toon where a mischievous entity creeps into the music room armed with sheet music from Living Colour, Dead Kennedys, No Means No, Red-Hot Chili Peppers and Bad Brains, Harder Than You initially presents itself as a glorious pastiche of wam-bam thank you mayhem. What a glorious noise it is too. All the trickery of hardcore are laid bare here; the sphincter-tightening stop; the squealing buzz-saw start; the whirlwind maelstrom of bonk-o nuttiness that threatens to Hugo its way through Grandma's teapot collection. But it sure am FUNK-EEEE! At least for the first four tracks we suddenly find ourselves thrust into a throbbing pit of boisterous mutant pillows that try and force themselves up your arm-pits. Alright so you've never played any form of air instrument in your life but play "Jimi and Jam" or "Spyz Dope" and see if that invisible guitar doesn't suddenly manifest itself in your suddenly fluttering paws.

Somehow though, something starts to go wrong. Rather than continuing to be delighted by tight little nuggets of gonzooid crash and burn, we gradually become resigned to sieve around in a burgeoning amount of slops

for any dwindling evidence of good stuff. This is particularly true of side two where "Jungle Boogie" and "Spill My Guts" are schizophrenic enough to get you banging the old noggin against the cupboard one moment, while in the next suddenly thinking "Just what the f\*ck is this?!"

I've never really liked roots reggae except for really heavy dub so its probably not fair for me to say that "Sponji Reggae" is a soporific lot of old bobbins. But it is, so there. Well in anticipation of a real kamikaze blow-out for a closer by this stage then, disappointment continues to reign with the ilk of "Tango Skin Polka", "Pillage" and "New Drug". All of these are painfully disjointed little bleeders with only a few gasps of fresh-air between them.

24-7 SPYZ may well be dope, but on Harder Than You, the edges are just a little bit manky. Worth getting for the good bits by themselves but more importantly to remind us all that the next slab o'dab will very likely be a smashing gnashing beastie of humongous proportions.

Steve Griffiths



THE BEAR (JEAN-JACQUES ARNAUD)

The Bear is a disgustingly cute little ball of fluff that gets orphaned after Mum gets a bit too enthusiastic while digging out some honey from an unstable hillock of polystyrene boulders. Left on his own, it's one big adventure after another for little Douce who, after being befriended by a 2,000 lb Kodiak (little bear licks big bears arounds naturally), gets swiped at by a puma, eats some magic mushrooms and plays with a frog (Yipeel).

The concept is sure-fire, the photography shot in British Columbia is heartstopping and the animals will break your heart. Unfortunately it is my humble opinion that The Bear sucks a giant Redwood. Internationally, the continental French are rather renowned for being a little goofy. Benny Hill is a god there and nothing cracks the frogs up better than a good pant-wetting scene or a pair of huge boobs spilling out onto the restaurant table. This established, should we expect anything different than dream sequences that include muppet frogs with telescopic

eyes. Perhaps not.

The brunt of it is that if some rather more intelligent decisions had been made to leave out this sort of crap and to allow the little tyke to speak in its own voice rather than something that sounds like Sandy Dennis doing aerobics, I probably would have come out with the warm glow that was intended for anyone that stumbles across this inane schtick.

Director Arnaud was responsible for the excellent Name of the Rose and the cinematographer has under his belt such aesthetic masterpieces as Diva and Dangerous Liaisons. As such one is hard pressed to wonder how on earth such a presumably dynamic duo could have allowed what would have been a delightful piece of story-telling into a fully fledged farce. Cinematographer Philippe Rousselot certainly captures the countryside perfectly but, blessed with a good camera, who wouldn't in this environment. What is particularly disturbing are the few concept shots that are so painfully out of place that I really did giggle at some

of the more awful moments. Most of the clever stuff is reserved for the ham-fisted symbolism of "golly guns are pretty nasty!" At one point we gaze up a line of bullets at a full moon (ie. a from under-the-coffee-table shot), in another the camera zooms in through a hole blown through a tree by a split-lead slug and in yet another we see the hunters eye gazing down his clean rifle barrel embarrassingly reminiscent of one of the opening sequences of a Bond movie. In all this sort of nonsense is rather insulting. It's true, this rubbish is aimed at the most impressionable members of the audience ie. the youngsters, but of course this is also a generation that voraciously consumes all manner of sickening violence from TV where death is a cartoon and suffering is a completely alien concept anyway. Does Arnaud really think he is making a substantial comment here?

Shouldered with the responsibility of educating the audience, the blessing of the WWF (Wildlife not Wrestling though the latter complements the intuition of the film) and what appears to be a desire to enlighten us about the importance of conservation in our own back yard, Arnaud fails again and again to deliver any immediately tangible message.

If story-telling is the aim here, then surely it would have been far more appropriate to deliver that all-important moral or at least to imbue us with something more memorable and emotionally infectious than this standard handling of the anthropomorphic sad-happy-sad-happy cute creature formula that doesn't do anything except make over a hundred million dollars.

Muppets, humping bears and spaghetti-western acting aside I must emphasize again that it is the audience experience that reduces The Bear to something really silly. The musical score by Philippe Sarde is booming and grandiose and actually fits the work perfectly. Panorama, tension, joviality - Philippe knows where his strings are. But if anybody needs to be sat on by a large grizzly it is Sound Engineer Laurent Quaglio who makes birds sound like they belong in a novelty shop and the affectionate licking scene (of which there are rather too many) are rendered horribly reminiscent of the orgy scenes in Guccione's atrocious Calligula.

No animals are harmed in any way in this film, they say right at the beginning but after seeing the poor little bastard being nearly drowned (three times) obviously doped in some scenes and confronted with hungry cat and Dobemanns-from-hell in others, I have a little difficulty discerning just what these film makers actually mean by "harmd"

But do take the sprogs.

STEVE (LIMEY) GRIFFITHS

do when the scene suddenly changes? Keaton's answer - he always answers his own questions - is simple and realistic: you adapt!

Keaton plays his roles with a blank expression on his face: he is not a clown, not a tramp, not visibly different from any average Joe. This, perhaps, is a strength: Keaton is able to be one of us, regardless of which role he plays. He is one of us in "Sherlock, Jr.", when he fantasizes about the characters in a movie; and he is one of us when he is playing stone-age softball in 1923: "The Three Ages" (our second feature of the evening). "The Three Ages" is Keaton's answer to D.W.Griffith's "Intolerance." Griffith's rather overdramatized allegory was seen by Keaton as the ideal ground for parody, and Keaton used a similar parable structure in presenting his version of courtship through the ages. In "The Three Ages," Keaton depicts lovers having it out during the stone age, the Roman Empire years, and the modern era. This film is possible Keaton at his silliest - the 10 seconds during which cave-man Keaton "Invents" soft-ball are among the funniest moments film is able to offer.

Satisfy your curiosity; gratify your sense of humour; indulge in two silent comedies in one night! Both "Sherlock Jr." and "The Three Ages" will be shown on Friday, Nov. 10, and Saturday, Nov. 11. at 8:00 PM. Memberships available at the door.

PETER FRIESEN

KEATON'S GIFT A CHANCE TO SEE SOME SILENT COMEDY CLASSICS

In the realm of the silent picture comedians, the greatest contenders were Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin - yet the sources of humour were markedly different. Chaplin always established himself as a victim of some cruel externalized force, and much of his humour was laced with a sense of pathos. Keaton, on the other hand, never begged for the audience's sympathy; he was a victim, but he was always responsible for his own fate. Whereas Chaplin would be victimized by a machine made by others, Keaton always provided the instruments of his own destruction. Keaton's films reveal the cynical awareness that humanity is responsible for its own fate. There is no mysterious external enemy - in Keaton's films, he is his own enemy. Keaton's intellectual edge, and his unwillingness to beg the audience's sympathy, initially estranged him from the attention of the war-torn masses of the early 1920's. Hence, while Chaplin's large audience reached for its hankies, Keaton gained only the respect of the critics.

Keaton's films, however, are again beginning to gain ground on Chaplin's. In 1985, Woody Allen's "Purple Rose of Cairo" (to be

shown next term) borrowed its essential premise directly from Keaton's "Sherlock, Jr." (1924), and Keaton consequently began to gain the attention he had deserved all along. Keaton was, after all, as brilliant behind the camera as he was in front of it. In "Sherlock Jr.", Buster Keaton not only proved himself as writer, director, and star, but he also redefined the possibilities of cinema. Although the movie lasted just over an hour, Keaton not only demonstrated the type of visual effects which the camera was capable of creating, but he also dramatically expressed the type of effect which the camera's work might have on the audience. The premise of the film is surreal: "Keaton, in the role of a film projectionist, falls asleep, slides down the beam of light from his machine, enters the screen, and takes part in the drama being played out there. Subsequently the unfortunate dreamer gets lost in the middle of a world whose face changes in an unforeseen manner around him. Diving off a high rock to save a blond heroine struggling in the waves, he lands on desert sand under the astonished gaze of a lion." Keaton's scenario presents an interesting problem: if life is a movie, what do you