

Record Reviews

Lisa Lisa
LL77
(Pendulum/EMI)

Listening to this release left me in aural agony the first time around. The bass throughout the entire recording is extremely muddy and muffled. Since having good bass is so integral in dance recordings, this was a major annoyance. Overall, the music was characterized by this droning bass, sub-audible drums, a few percussive effects and some interesting electric and acoustic guitar textures.



The lyrics (which she did not write any of) are simple and generic with choruses that seem to approach infinity. However, "Same Old Thing", does have decent lyrics about personality stereotypes and racial discrimination with a snappy alternating chorus.

"Skip To My Lu" is by far the most danceable song. It has a swinging

tempo, bouncy percussion and a catchy chorus. Lisa Lisa is an obvious Paula Abdul wannabe in the video. "Knockin' Down The Walls" and "When I Fell In Love", are also catchy and uptempo tunes but rank much lower on the dance scale.

Aside from these few songs, the others all seem soulfully sleepy, relatively boring, more repetitive and less practical. In fact, most of the songs will not reach the dance floor unless they are given some massive remixing.

If you are a really big Lisa Lisa fan, the best thing you could do is purchase the single for "Skip To My Lu" and stop at that. If you really must add LL 77 to your collection, please do not listen to it while driving or operating any type of heavy machinery.

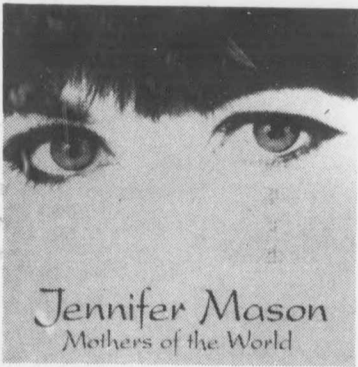
-Jason Tremere

Jennifer Mason
Mothers of the World
(A&M/Polygram)

At first glance, everything about this album shouts 'cheese'. From the title, to the album cover (mostly white, with two big blue eyes that look poorly colored), to the New Age titles of the songs ("Yemanjá", "Akanda", "Children of the Sea"), the whole project seems amateur and pretentious. The opening sea noise (another New Age touch) and the first electric piano chords do nothing to change this impression. But, further listening and reading of notes does re-

veal an effort of some substance.

Mothers of the World, according to the back cover, contains music influenced by ancient lullabies from around the globe—hence the title. Sure enough, tracks 2-7 are traditional lullabies, rendered by Mason and a keyboardist named Paul Gilman.



These songs do actually come from all corners of the world—Africa, Spain, Wales, Turkey, Japan, and North America (Cayuga Nation, part of the Iroquois Confederacy). These songs are the best on the album—the New Age noises complement the gentle melodies quite well. True to the concept, some of the longer tracks, with the hypnotic, pulsing beat and the drifting, exotic vocals, can lull one into a doze. Mothers of the World is a good album to play while eating supper or while studying: in a way, it rewards inattention.

The other four songs are originals. The last song, "Children of the Sea", is the cheese I initially expected of the whole effort. The nausea induced by the frankly naive, simplistic lyrics in compounded by a chorus of

children's voices. The other originals, however, do not grate as harshly. "Akanda" is 'an improvised rhapsody to the spirit of East Indian music', and "Gai'a's Song" is a multi-lingual reflection on the whole project—both true to the lullaby-source of this music. "Sea Gypsies" could have been a sappy precursor to the final song, but it really is not bad; Mason's vocals fit the superior lyrics just fine.

If you feel compelled to get this album, buy the compact disc version and program out the final song. "Children of the Sea" really brings down the quality of some honest, diverse music.

-Andrew Sneddon

Haze and Shuffle
Get Your Haze
(Arista/BMG)

Get Your Haze is the a major label debut (I assume) for Quebec band Haze and Shuffle. This is a metal band, and the members photograph on the sleeve conjures up the worst of expectations. But, even though this band does jump through many of the typical genre hoops, their music is rather good.

This album sounds like those moments, usually near the end of a concert, when the band relaxes into a comfortable groove and the singer works the crowd a bit (The Pursuit of Happiness do this very well, for example). The music in this kind of activity is repetitive, yet pregnant with something that

draws the listener in. There is relaxation within a pattern, and, for some reason, this can be both enticing and enjoyable. Haze and Shuffle makes music that exemplifies a skillful use of this kind of restraint in almost every song. In spite of the heard-em-before Robert Plant/Axl Rose vocals (also Kingdom Come and Gene Loves Jezebel, somehow), these songs can be engaging. No, not because of the lyrics—on paper they approach incoherence and stupidity—but because of the performance. Haze and Shuffle know they'll sound really stupid if they blow these songs up into over-the-top metal dramas, so they strip things down to a



near minimalist groove that is compelling because it's catchy (more than a few hooks here).

Listeners who have an old soft spot for metal might like to indulge in this offering—it's catchy, it's cocksure, and it's Canadian.

-Andrew Sneddon

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