

Music

Lolita full of contradictions

Lolita Nation
Game Theory
(Rational/Enigma)

review by Mike Spindloe

Once in a while, a pop record comes along that makes you forget how jaded and cynical you've become. *Lolita Nation*, by Game Theory is one such record. They are, apparently, from San Francisco, and this double album is, apparently, their first, which makes their achievement all the more remarkable because they've seized the moment as if it were their last.

Lolita Nation is an album of contradictions. If one is to believe the song titles ("We Love You Carol and Alison," "Kenneth, What's the Frequency," "All Clockwork and No Bodily Fluids Makes Hal a Dull Metal Humbert," etc.), then the whole project is simply a colossal inside joke between the band, their friends, or perhaps the characters they've created. And interspersed with the "real" songs are little snippets of — autobiography or fiction — references to "our well-trained ears" and working in record stores and so on.

But rather than go crazy trying to decipher it all without the benefit of a lyric sheet, the best thing to do is to concentrate on the

sound of the music, which is an unpredictable mix of distortion-drenched guitar riffs ("Dripping With Looks"), hook-laden popcraft ("The Real Sheila," "Chardonnay," etc) and offbeat balladry ("Andy In Ten Years").

What ultimately unites the disparate styles Game Theory have developed is an attitude. Something like this is the way it just had to sound, so it does. Descriptions and definitions will always fall short of translating this into words; you simply have to hear it.

By pillaging every convention of the last 25 years from pop to psychedelia to punk and making it their own, Game Theory have succeeded in creating a synthesis that is instantly recognizable as their own. It is easily listenable despite large doses of raunchiness and is brimming with the spirit and irreverence that has all but disappeared in the demographic world of rock and roll.

If there is a single weak point to this album it is the whole raft of musical fragments that flash by in rapid succession on side three. Whether they're meant to be cute or filler or whatever, they serve no purpose and add nothing to the final impression. But we're talking about three or four minutes out of 70 here, so no big deal.

Lolita Nation is a record that fits into the here and now effortlessly. The production by veteran Mitch Easter is aggressive but not overbearing, allowing the personality of



Game Theory (schizophrenic though it may be) to come through loud and clear. It will be interesting to see where this adventurous

effort falls in the over-pigeonholed marketplace. Here's hoping it reaches a lot of open ears.



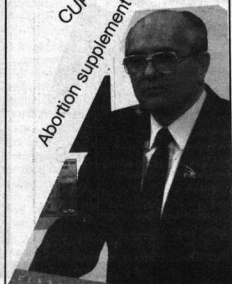
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