

CD REVIEW EXTRAVAGANZA

Harlem World

MASE

Bad Boy Records/BMG Music
Canada

Mason Betha wants to introduce you to his 'Harlem World'. Betha, more popularly known as 'Mase', has finally released his eagerly awaited first album.

For those of you that don't know Mase, believe me, you will. It's a testament to Mase's talent as a rapper that he has risen from relative obscurity to being a lyrical powerhouse in just over a year. And he's only 20.

He made his debut on the Bad Boy remix for 112's "Only You", and since has appeared on hit single after hit single, such as the late Notorious B.I.G.'s "Mo Money Mo Problems".

My major problem with Mase's style of rap is his mellow voice and slow delivery. Although it makes him distinct from other rappers, it doesn't make him as attention-grabbing. He has to mix it up a little

bit. Fortunately, he does more than make up for those drawbacks with his charisma and smooth rap ability.



This album is great to say the least. I can't get it out of my CD player, and that's not just because it's broken. There's just too many infectious hooks and phat beats that make me want to keep listening to it.

The big party jam on this disc is "Feels So Good", which features a

sped-up sample of Kool & The Gang's "Hollywood Swingin'". Mase has smartly chosen his own signature style, and has given the album much variety by straying away from the Bad Boy family for production. This is better summed up by Mase in the track "Do You Wanna Get \$": "See the moral of the story is, I'm not here to replace Notorious. I'm just a young cat trying to do his thing, Harlem World style, pursue my dream."

It's been a long time since I've heard such an excellent debut album. If you even remotely like Mase, buy it. Or better yet, buy it for a friend, borrow it, and never return it, because you won't want to.

ASHIR SIDDIQUI



Peace and Noise
Patti Smith
Arista

Whoa! The Patti Smith we all know from before has definitely left the building. Gone are the cheesy love ballads of yesteryear as Smith emerges from her metamorphosis. It seems to me that she dug out some old seventies albums, and some blues and some jazz, and realized it was time for change.

Thus, we have *Peace and Noise*,

which proves to be quite the compelling compilation of political statements and soulful rock with a P.J. Harvey sound. A big difference between this album and past Patti Smith stuff is that the mood is much darker. An eerie resemblance to the Doors is a big feature of the album. In fact, the nine-minute improvised poem-ish track "memento mori" (dedicated to William S. Burroughs) sounds like a long lost track from Jim Morrison's *An American Prayer*.

Overall, the album sounds good. There are some catchy riffs and lyrics that could keep a psychoanalyst busy for weeks on end.

Although this is a good change for Smith, the annoying fact is that this sound in itself is not a new thing. While listening to the album, more and more "borrowed" style emerges from P.J. Harvey and the Doors. It would be much cooler if Smith could come up with her own new thing. Not that this album is completely void of originality: it is a damn site more original than her past work, and that in itself is satisfying. Smith has learned to change with the times and really, this is a good thing, because that gooshy, cheesy love 'n' woe shit just doesn't impress anyone anymore.

JANET FRENCH

underdogs

Matthew Good Band
Darktown/ A&M

At most rock shows, a band plays for two hours or so, leaves the stage, and everyone is mildly or not-at-all affected. Sure, you've got your hardcore fans who can't wait for the

next celestial power chord, but they're basically anomalies.

Honestly, that's all you need to know about the Matthew Good Band. Not that they're bad, or unskilled, or even boring—they just sound like every other alternative pop/rock band out there.

Some fans like their approach to music—they find comfort in knowing that whatever they put in their CD player will not be radically different from what they just took out.

The rest of us don't like this approach to song writing. Something has to be said about the stale nature of popular music; about how, when one band sounds just like the other, it creates apathy.

At a recent press conference, band members agreed with this synopsis of the Canadian music scene, saying "a lot of first time bands... are interchangeable".

What they failed to do, however, was defend their own originality. Maybe they thought that their music would set them apart; maybe they knew otherwise.

GREG MCFARLANE

III

Download
Nettwerk

In the tradition of alternative bands like Prodigy and Underworld, Download's new album *III* amalgamates a complicated mixture of dance music and electronica. This style of music has become increasingly popular with the growth of the rave sub-culture. Fast-paced, heart-pounding, energized music is typical of raves and Download's music certainly fits this mold.

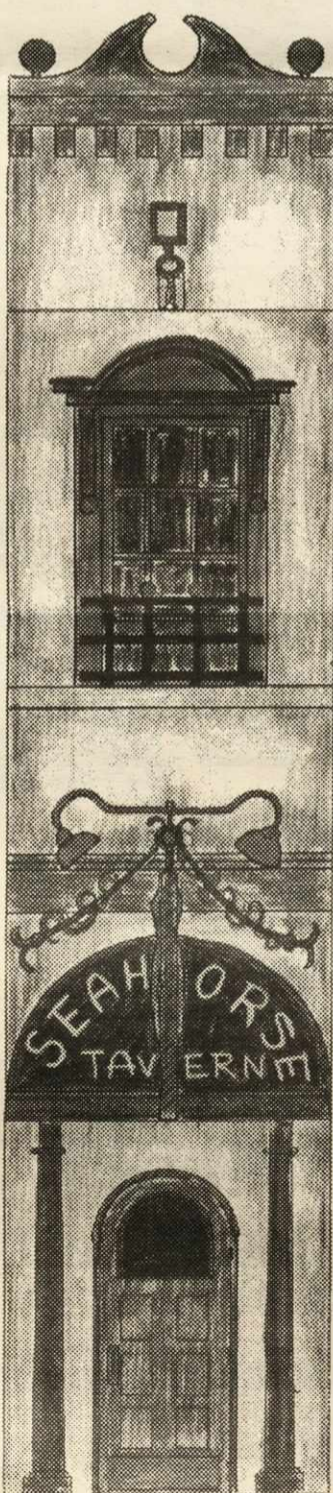
Though their music has its mellow points where the song will have a lucid flow of soft, synthesized music, for the most part it's music that empowers one with the urge to dance.

All of the music on the record is composed and produced by Download; most of it is worth listening to, but, for some, electronica is an acquired taste.

However, if you are in to rave or

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