

Reviews

Highlights Edmonton bands

will they?

The record jacket for this album definitely leaves many things to be desired, being cheap black with some white lettering. Happily, this is mostly remedied by the enclosed booklet, in which each band has a page to fill in with various bits

of silliness.

One final note, before the editor decides I've babbled enough: either there's something intermittently wrong with the turntable I use, or a couple of the songs (most notably Big Inc.'s) suffer from lack of high-end, as if someone went Dolby-crazy. Murky mixes are a pain.

's Peepshow offers variety

variety here.

There is, however, a central theme to the album. Says Siouxsie: "... each song represents a sort of Peeping Tom situation... It's like stripping away the side of an apartment building and watching the different lives going on in parallel in each room or box." You'll have to take her word for it, though. Most of the lyrics are too cryptic to figure out what she's singing about. Lines like "Heaven sent/Some dark marvel/Fool's gold/As cold as marble" (from "Turn to Stone") are too abstract for any specifics to be pinned to them. That's fine because Siouxsie's gift has always been the power of her voice, not her insight.

My only complaint is that the whole album (like almost everything I've ever heard by this band) has a slightly thin sound, as if it were recorded through a sound compressor. Fans of Siouxsie and the Banshees are certainly used to their slightly distant, sterile sound by now, so they should enjoy this album thoroughly. As for anyone who is wondering what the Banshees have been on about all these

years, they will get a pretty good idea by listening to *Peepshow*.



Vancouver's Sons of Freedom have released an excellent debut album.

Vancouver's Sons of Freedom impress with debut

Sons of Freedom
Sons of Freedom
Slash/WEA

by Mike Spindloe

Who says that all of the great Canadian bands hail from the east? Not I, especially since recently hearing a couple of excellent debuts by essentially *Western* Canadian bands: first, The Pursuit of Happiness (reviewed earlier in this space) and now Vancouver's Sons of Freedom.

The latter pack one of the most concentrated aural punches ever to emerge from

Canada's lotusland, including the many fine releases of the Nettwerk and Zulu record labels. Sons of Freedom use sheets of sound driven by chunky, repetitive, rhythmic blasts of guitar chording, a steady backbeat and relentlessly aggressive bass lines to bludgeon you into acceptance; the surrender, however, is a willing one.

Lurking somewhere in the grooves is a message. Whether that message is meant to incite revolution or merely to create awareness of social issues is a moot point; Sons of Freedom claim the latter, but the power of their music suggests the former.

That power, in fact, can easily obscure the words to the songs, but it is quite possible to enjoy the disc as a purely cerebral experience. On the other hand, "Judy Come Home" rails against domestic violence, and a song titled "Fuck the System" requires little in the way of topical clarification.

Vocalist and guitarist Jim Newton possesses a voice that falls somewhere between Jeffrey Lee Pierce (The Gun Club) and Ian Astbury (The Cult), a plaintive drone that is just off-key enough to sound like he meant it that way. Set against the twin-guitar onslaught, it seems an entirely appropriate voice, radiating tension and anger in a sometimes more, sometimes less decipherable manner.

If there is a weakness to *Sons of Freedom*, it is that there is a certain sameness to the songs. The dynamic rarely varies, so that the record works best in that certain place and time when only an intense musical expression of unbridled aggression will do. If you ever find yourself in that place, then *Sons of Freedom* should be part of your collection.

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