



SKRATCHMEAT



Voice in the Night
(Enigma Records)

Funny how you can spot some things a mile off. In goes this cassette, and right away my suspicions are realised when it is quite obvious the Mass are leaning towards the latest camp of watered down metal (lets give it a term right now shall we....? I propose *sponge-metal* or *quiche-metal*). But hang on here a minute... this sounds rather too bad even for *sponge-metal*. Even before the opening title track is over, I became astounded at the magnificently crap androgynous harmonies, with the whole song collapsing into a perulant smear of custard-slime between 'comparisons' of the worst aspects of Styx and Kiss. But the worst part of the whole thing is that it sounds so damned ineffectual; the tools are there, but rather than come charging into our lives with a thunderbolt of angry energy, Mass merely flit about ones face like so many gnats armed to the teeth with little sprigs of damp lettuce. Gradually it begins to dawn on me that Mass may be..... A CHRISTIAN METAL BAND (Gasps from the audience). Four tracks into the lamentably pedestrian first side, I scramble over the bench to get at the cassette and whip out the fold-out cover that contains the lyrics. Sure enough, two songs of the second side I keep on searching for that better way
In God I'm found and now I'll never stray
(from Follow Me)
*He came some time ago,
To every shore.
He showed us greater faith
Thru Heavens door*
(from Staying Alive)
Ladies and Gentlemen... *Quod erat demonstrandum* (audience applauds). But no matter, despite the fact that most

people I know who are devoutly religious are unquestionably the most stupid, offensive and cruel individuals it has been my displeasure to become acquainted with; despite the fact that I whole heartedly condemn any form of human suffering invariably associated with religious zealotry, I give it a listen. I mean - even though it has far from recommended itself at this early stage, to blatantly deride this piece on the basis of a single listen would make me just as bad as any of 'em right? Right. So I spend the rest of the afternoon listening to 'Voices in the Night', which I'm afraid to say does suck.
The closing track (Staying Alive) does actually offer some hope of excitement with a thundering double bass-drum kicker and throbbing shreds á la Anthrax/Metallica. But pretty soon it's business as usual and the unmistakable sound of yawning comes from half-way down the corridor. All the way through we experience the shrieks of men that appear to have their testicles caught under the prayer stool, while shouting lyrics that are such utterly dreadful simplistic nonsense, that I'm not really surprised that nobody get specific credit for having written them on the sleeve notes.
The devil gets a lot of press from the metal genre these days, and its a pity that bands of this ilk can't get to sounding enthusiastic about kicking his ass back to hell in no uncertain terms. Instead Mass have produced a poncey bag of limpid songs that will have as much influence on the hypothetical anti-Christ and his minions as a snowball in a vat of cooking oil.

STEVE GRIFFITHS

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
Lincoln
(Restless Records)

They're nuts. They're those funny lookin' nurds that always stayed in during recess and snurked and snorted over obscure trivia and those wierd comic books that Mom said we shouldn't read, lest we go blind. They're They Must Be Giants and they're a scream.
What can I say. Cow Town is typical of the content of Lincoln. It contains the line 'I'm going to see the cow beneath the sea' and ends on the pole that 'Our only home is bone'. What does it all mean? Who cares - I found myself grinning for about three straight minutes as the song jumped around like a callopre in deus ex machina mode.
If any singular impression jumps out and bites you at all, it is one of nostalgia - mostly of an era that is concentrated on the first three quarters of the nineteen sixties. It may be some jazz latin, the tinge of a freaky Beatles outtake, the opening theme of an ancient children's show, the incidental music from a t.v. murder mystery or most bizarrely a song that seems to be constructed entirely around one of those ice-cream commercials you would see at the drive-in at that time, with the baton twirling hot dog leading a group of pirouetting tastec-freezes. This song is called Shoehorn with
You can find a hokey tribute to The Righteous Brothers on 'Piece of Dirt', the vaudevill insanity of The World's Address and the distinctly unsettling (I saw my baby wearing) Santa's beard, and some homage to Captain Beefheart on You'll miss me. In all, unless the listener just happens to be a gifted analyst, it may be that the rest of us will be left with a grab-bag full of non-sequiturs and cryptic messages, but somehow it still works quite magically. Some months ago I wondered what Deja Voodoo might sound like if they had the audacity to venture away from that godawful monstrously scholockabily they cling to. This may be a close approximation. For weirdos everywhere.

STEVE GRIFFITHS

**SO YOU WANT TO BE
★ A POP-GOD? ★**

our little monster tells you how

There seems to be a predetermined formula for how to succeed in the music business and how to act afterwards. What follows constitutes the rules of commercial music and musicians.

THE LAW OF AGE. Any really gorgeous 16-year-old is automatically going to be a total success, no matter how untalented (s)he is. Writing, performing, producing, and recording your songs yourself helps quite a bit. Example: Debbie Gibson.
SUBLAW OF TUNELESSNESS: If you are a teen singer like the aforementioned, you must not have any more than three notes making up your song. The absolute maximum is four. Examples: "Only In My Dreams," "Shake Your Love," "Under Your Spell."
REPETITIONS RULE: 75% of your songs must be interchangeable with each other as well as those of your competitors. That is, you must be able to sing the lyrics of one song to another. Example: Stacey Q's "Two Of Hearts" and "We Connect" and "Insecurity" and "Dancing Nowhere" and every other song on her first album, "Better Than Heaven."
LAW OF OVERPLAY: The most annoying songs are played over and over and over until they stick in your brain, you buy the album, and then once you play the album you get the songs stuck again so you have to hear the album again...and again...and again...! Examples: Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry Be Happy," Kylie Minogue's "Loco-Motion."
RULE OF BIRTHPLACE: It is virtually guaranteed that if you were born in Britain, California, New York, Toronto, Ireland, Vancouver, Italy, or some totally unheard of American town, you will make it big for at least a year. If you come from any place in Canada other than the aforementioned, you probably won't make it very well outside the country.
MODELLING RULE (FEMALE): Law states that if you are a 33-24-36 B-cup or above with blonde or red hair, not only will you get a fat recording contract, you will also be eligible to model Natural Wonder makeup, Miss Clairol, or some shampoo. Examples: Debbie Gibson, Belinda Carlisle. (I'm ashamed to have Belinda's name now.) (Steady on! -Ed.)

COMMANDMENT OF CRUSHES (MALES): If you are a male between thirteen and thirty-five with real good looks (the kind dictated by teen mags), you are guaranteed extensive coverage in Teen Beat, Tiger Beat, Wow, or any magazines of that genre, thus ensuring your recording success, no matter how bad you are, because girls all over the country will fall in love with you. Example: Rick Astley.
COMMANDMENT OF CRUSHES (FEMALE): If you are over thirteen and under twenty, have blonde hair, blue eyes, and a lot of precociousness (thereby fulfilling the Law Of Age), all of the teen magazines will run extensive features on you, ensuring recording success.
LAW OF SNOTTINESS (FEMALE): If you have achieved Commandment status, you can be as snobby as you want and absolutely every magazine will talk about how nice you are for stepping on people's faces.
CONCERT STATUS LAW: Appearing in backwater areas is OUT OF THE QUESTION. Your tour should be to really flashy places or you're totally dodgy wanker in terms of advertising. Hold your concerts in places that people have heard of. Examples: Guns And Roses, Madonna. (This rule does not apply if you are Canadian.)
LAW OF LOOKS: Unless you are one of those strange people like Cyndi Lauper, you should fit a predetermined mold as far as looks are concerned. Female: Blonde or red hair, blue or green hourglass figure, 110 pounds, 5'6" and a half tall, B-cup or larger, and measurements of 34-26-34. Males: Tall, any color hair, no zits, 150 pounds, 6 feet, relatively slender build, and blue eyes.
QUALITY AND LYRIC RULE: Your songs should all be mushy "I love you" types with a monotone melody and repetitive background. NO MARGIN FOR ERROR!
If an artist lives up to at least half of these requirements, AVOID THEIR MUSIC AT ALL COSTS!!!!
By CASSANDRA



THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS... or they might be a little emotionally disturbed.



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