

MUSIC REVIEWS AND MORE MUSIC REVIEWS

LES CLAYPOOL AND THE HOLY MACKEREL

Highball and the Devil
(Interscope/MCA)

There is no way that I am going to be able to write about Les Claypool's side project without mentioning, or comparing something to Primus. Claypool is Primus and whoever happens to back him up will have to get use to the fact that he dominates any song with his awe inspiring bass playing. However, on this new CD, the Ohio born demi-God is able to tone down the overdriven bass sound and focus more on the structure of the songs, causing the album to sound smooth and clean.

Of course Primus fans will not be disappointed as the creative input of Claypool's typical experimental sound shines through. Interestingly enough, though, the songs are a lot more poppy and become a lot more bearable with time. Still, Les's strained, almost whiny vocal technique can often cause the listener to wish for an LP of instrumental proportions. There is also a retro feel to this album, which may not come as a surprise to some. There is the all too obvious surf song "Hendershot", or the opening track "Running the Gauntlet", which sounds like a really weird Beatles tune; you know, like post *Rubber Soul*. This adds uniqueness and makes the album more enjoyable. The recording itself is very pleasing to the ear, the pure stereo sound wipes away the hard driving drums; which if I am not mistaken, were recorded on a 4-track.

Chances are, this record will not bring a huge amount of notoriety from the newly converted, but it is the kind of album that has atmosphere. Plus, it would n't be a bad idea to crank this stuff up on your car stereo and let the music

take you on a journey to nowhere; allow me to suggest the trip from Summerside to Charlottetown. Truth is, I am not a primus fan, but I am a music lover, and this is a good disk

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Matt Mooney

Dream Warriors
The Master Plan
(EMI)

Let's take a trip back to the old school. The times where Maestro Fresh Wes became the first African-Canadian to go Platinum, and Public Enemy and N.W.A. were spreading their truths about the inner city. Now, take into account that the Dream Warriors came about at this time as well, when Rap music was actually fresh and exciting; and the flavour of the month was not just "bitch this, bitch that". *The Master Plan* bridges the progressive with the regressive and creates a sound that everyone should dig; give it up for Canada.

While the few interludes that are available on this album upset the flow, the first song, "The Era of 'Stay Real'" is a smart blend of great lyrics, a melodic jazzy piano sample, and an all around groovy rhythm. Intelligence is of the essence when it comes to Toronto's favourite hip hop songs, and their ability to meld important issues about censorship and the ghetto, is pulled off amazingly well. Their first single "Sound Clash", offers some philosophies on free speech and delivering the truth when they say, "it's so unfair to shoot the messenger, when the public is so eager to hear the message." Nothing is overpowering on this record and the mood the Dream Warriors presents is much like A Tribe Called Quest.

Some people call "rap music" an oxy moron, but

those are the same people who cannot appreciate smart lyrical content, a free flowing rhythm, and a groovy song structure. Hip hop is alive and well in the Great White North while the support it deserves may not be so ever present. The Dream Warriors are an institution and their sound is able to crossover from the pop charts to the hip hop charts, which makes this record exciting and really enjoyable.

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Matt Mooney

Another White Male
Cattle
(A&M)

I understand that the majority of the people reading this review are Canadian and may never have seen MTV except for special event thingamabobs on Muchmusic; so I will tell these people of the interesting fact that the metal show, "Headbanger's Ball", has recently been cancelled. This may signal the disappearance of heavy metal as we know it. It most likely can be explained by the "anything loud" label getting filtered into the alternative scene. Canada's Another White Male, begins their career in this state of flux. Are they metal or heavy duty alterno rock?

Their disc, *Cattle*, holds onto the good old days of massive gain and contoured amps, with "Angst" and "Monday". However, their mainstream potential is represented by the song "Tis", which appears to be very influenced by the overlaid 70's fuzz pedal sound. Despite some o.k. songs, the recording is just not chunky enough for this kind of music. I don't want to sound contrived when I begin by saying that I play bass and like the bass, and then go on to say that I wish there was more bass. The songs remain distant with-

out a thunderingly hard bass sound, and the treble charged record can easily become annoying at times.

It is very rare that I come right out and say that I do not like an album, and I will not do so today either. I will however warn the buyer, that if you just came home from hearing these boys live, you will be disappointed with the album. I will bet that it is very likely that Another White Male sounds wicked live, and they just don't know how to record albums, so I will try not to be too hard on them. The songs aren't great, but they could have sounded a lot better.

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Matt Mooney

Sublime
Sublime
(MCA/Gasoline)

I have heard quite a buzz over these American boys, who call themselves Sublime. My cousin in New York told me about this band last year and I haven't found any evidence to back up the "next big thing" label: until now. The proof is in the compact disc, boys and girls; and with approximately 75 minutes of music, including 16 fresh new vibes (sorry Master T!), Sublime could be a hit. Remember, you heard this here first.

Allow me to begin with the unoriginal form of reviewing cds and that is by citing musical influences. Ska, reggae, punk, folk-pop, and hip hop all come into the fold in some way or another. Trust me when I say that every single song is different in it's own right. I mean, c'mon, the song "Seed" has four different tempos crammed into two minutes and ten seconds. "April 29, 1992 (Miami)" relies on the motivation of the ever so capable sound of Boogie Down Productions and

adds a tinge of ultra tangy reggae. And my personal fave, the extraordinary song, "Same in the End", has The Clash written all over it. One may draw the conclusion that anthologies are becoming more common than the monotonous albums of the early 90's; but I can personally draw the conclusion that my main homies Sloan, did that from the start. (Plug! Plug!) Anyhoo!! Getting back to the facts, the album has feeling, emotion and soul; and perhaps a little Earth, Wind and Fire as well. It is pleasing to the ear and the lyrical content is unique and always adds texture to their songs. I would not be surprised if these boys turned out to be students of music all the way.

A very, very cool album. In the words of Jim Carrey, "I like it a lot". Do yourself a favour and try it out. It doesn't matter if you prefer to dance or mosh, it appears as if you can do either or; it just depends on your mood. Maybe that is the best thing about this record, how it complements the listener in a strange sort of way. Oh yeah, and remember, you heard it here first.

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Matt Mooney

Big Sugar
Hemi Vision
(A&M)

I would like to state that Big Sugar is not just a solo project anymore. No sir. This record proves that Big Sugar is indeed a band and boy, the band sounds better. Take a listen to their newest cd *Hemi Vision*, and prepare to take a flight into the atmosphere of superpartyrawkiness, to the power of 2. I love this album. It destroyed my impression of this Toronto based group, and built me up to something that I like very much indeed.