



# The Music Beet



This is the Ice Age - Martha and the Muffins

Since their debut album, Metro Music, and the international hit, "Echo Beach", Canada's Martha and the Muffins have undergone quite a few changes. One of the Martha's is gone - Martha Ladly left for England to start her own group. Bassist Carl Finkle is gone and has been replaced by Jocelyne Lanois, while guitarist Mark Gane has filled the gap created by Ladly's departure.

The personnel is not the only feature of the band that has changed. This Is The Ice Age is an almost complete departure from the bubblegum-laden Metro Music. In one respect this is good. However, at the same time, gone is the freshness and vigor which characterized cuts like "Echo Beach" and "Paint By Number Heart". It has largely been replaced with

eerie, haunting, more sophisticated melodies. In effect, they have taken a good deal of the fun out of their music and injected a conquerable portion of gloom.

There are a couple of exceptions to the above observation, notable the single "Women Around the World at Work" and the up tempo "You Sold the Cottage."

This is the Ice Age brings to the fore the lyrical intelligence and vocal ability of Mark Gane (he has been compared to Lou Reed). This is clearest in "Swimming" and "Bay Without Filters".

Martha and the Muffins could have been excused for selling out. After all, the band was only months old when a British record label (Virgin) signed them to a recording contract - before they even had a Canadian contract. However, This is the Ice Age gives me the impression that this

band is growing and taking itself seriously and, at the same time, helping the Canadian recording industry do the same.

Jumpin' Jive - Joe Jackson

I'm still having difficulty believing that this is the same Joe Jackson that gave us I'm the Man. Well, Joe, you may be the man but you're going to have a hell of a time winning back the rock/punk fans that you are going to lose with Jumpin' Jive. Don't get me wrong - in its own right Jumpin' Jive is a good album. It's just that I don't think that fans of Look Sharp and I'm the Man are quite ready for this.

To hear Jackson revive 40's swing (on every cut) is a surprise along the lines of Jeff Beck jamming with Slim Whitman. So, you don't pay that much attention on the first listen - you keep checking the l.p. jacket

to make sure that this whole thing is for real.

Now, for the Music. Is it any good? Yes, if pop/jazz is your thing, it is very good. The balance of the l.p. is material made popular by the likes of Glenn Miller, Cab Calloway, and Louis Jordon. Two Jordon compositions are featured: "You're My Meat" and "What's the Use of Getting Sober (when you're Gonna Get Drunk Again)".

Anyone but Jackson probably wouldn't be able to pull this project off and get away with it. It is Jackson's very evident commitment to (and confidence with) the material that makes Jumpin' Jive work.

Joe Jackson produced and arranged Jumpin' Jive and the l.p. will probably stand as his least successful effort. In a way this is unfortunate - he had revived an often forgotten era in the evolution of pop music.



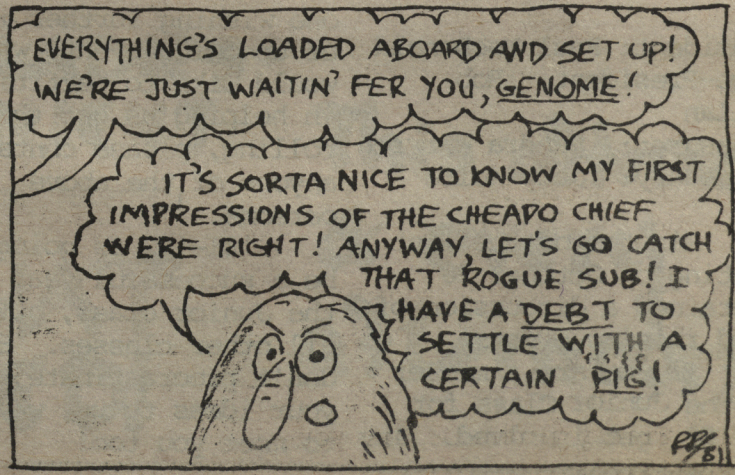
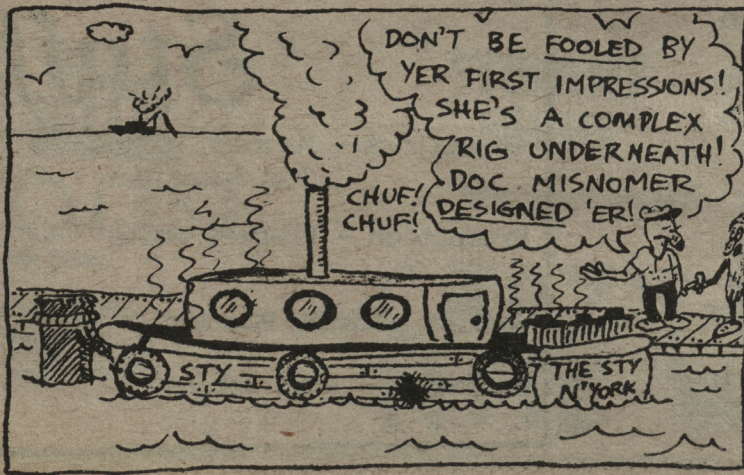
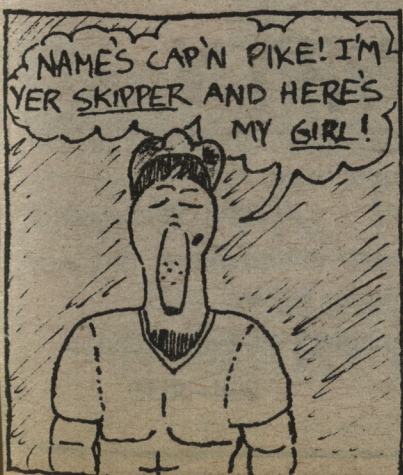
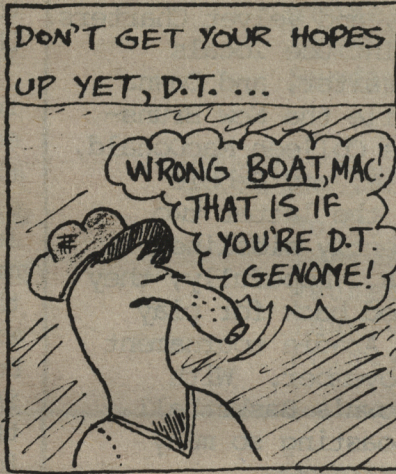
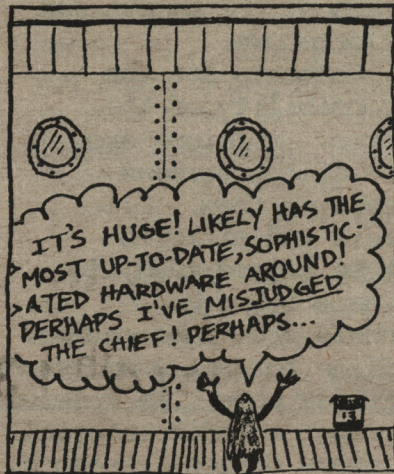
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