

# Choice Cuts

## Reviews of Everything?

Album: *Beautiful Tomorrow*  
 Artist: Blue Six  
 Label: Virgin

*Beautiful Tomorrow* has a lot going for it. It's cool, laid back, with some of the slowest, sexiest beats you'd ever want to kick back and sip martinis to. I imagine if I lived in an ultra-chic Manhattan penthouse, this is the kind of music I would unwind to. I've always wanted to own an album like this, I just didn't know where to find it.

But it's totally manufactured. Blue Six is not a band. It consists entirely of music-producer Jay Denes. This may explain why the album cover, liner notes, and the website consist entirely of cartoons. He doesn't want you to know that these rich, sensual sounds are coming from some suit who probably began his career as a stockbroker. Blue Six is on the verge of misrepresentation, because it does sort of suggest that there are six people behind the project. Of course, Denes doesn't sing on the album; he has a slew of guest vocalists for that (and they're really good), and then a lot of tracks are purely instrumental.

Anyway, if it doesn't bother you that the album is a top-down executive production, well then get it. Everyone should have at least one album like this in his or her album collection, just in case you ever decide to open an after-hours club.

-Joel MEGGS

North of America.  
*Elements of an Incomplete Map*.  
 Matlock Records.

This is one of NOA's older releases, but still quite formidable, and it attests to the consistency with which they've been producing quality music for however many years. After becoming accustomed to the angrier math rock angle which they've been working on lately (as evidenced in their live shows and most recent CD,



*This is Dance Floor Numerology*) it's easy to forget that they are/were an indie rock band, but this album constitutes a pleasant reminder of that fact. Still discordant, and laden with poorly sung (when there is any attempt at all to sound like they're singing) vocals, it's fresh and catchy enough to remind one of high school but still pretentious enough to be useful to disaffected college types. Do my reviews ever make any sense? I sure like this CD. Yep. Hey, anyone here ever get hit by a car?

-Jonah CAMPBELL

Album: *Forever*  
 Artist: Cracker  
 Label: Virgin

Michael Jackson's *Invincible*, Puff Daddy's *Forever*, The Spice Girls' *Forever*. I hate that! You're going to be around for a while, are you? Well prove it; don't just tell me.

Cracker is hanging on to alt-rock for dear life, but as this album more than proves, it takes more than the alternative designation to sustain a band. The music is entirely uninteresting, and this draws the listener's attention to the lyrics, which are the sort of uninspiring phrases that are scrawled on a napkin five minutes prior to recording.

Everything about this album screams boring. Except it's not even screaming it; it's just saying it in a monotone voice.

-Joel MEGGS

Album: *The Complete Discography: 1993-1996*  
 Artist: Shotmaker  
 Label: Troubleman Unlimited Records

Well, this sure is a lot of Shotmaker. When I first picked up this monstrous double CD (maybe not much for a discography, but when we're talking about hardcore bands, over two hours of music can be a pretty big deal) I thought to myself "I mean, I like Shotmaker well enough, but there's no way I can deal with two CDs worth . . ." As it turns out, I was wrong (well shut my mouth). Rather than getting incredibly sick of the abrasive, droning math rock sound which I had come to associate with this band, I developed a newfound appreciation for the underlying intensity and accomplished musicianship of this trio. They have the capacity to create a very impressive wall of sound without the luxury of a second guitar, which I would attribute to the prominence of the bass throughout their songs. This is certainly something that you have to be in just the right mood for to get into, but once you're in, you're in. Driving yet hypnotic, urgent and eloquent, all I can say is it's a damn shame these kids are no longer with us.

-Jonah CAMPBELL

Suddenly, the titles of records are like the provocative taunts wrestlers spew at one another.

I remember when *Kerosene Hat* came out, oh so many years ago. Cracker was one of those bands that was so unequivocally alternative and showed a lot of potential. The song *Low did* have real lasting power. It's a campus radio classic. But here we have thirteen tracks from a band that has long since exhausted its song writing powers.

They mention monkeys a lot: "You are so beautiful, you should be guarded by monkeys."

And then on a completely different song, "Brides of Neptune, guarded by monkeys."

I think that when you're writing lyrics this stupid, the hidden message is, 'I have nothing to say, but we have this record contract, so here's some lyrics about monkeys.'