

Virgin

FACT SHEET

ARTIST:

Japan

TITLE:

Exorcising Ghosts



Japan were one of the most unusual and exciting bands of the last ten years. They built up a committed following which still exists today.

After many requests, David Sylvian put together this double album retrospective of some of Japan's finest output covering the final three years of their work together.

The running order has been carefully chosen to ensure continuity of sound and atmosphere, and all titles included are in their original full length un-edited format, as the band intended them to be.

Included are two instrumental pieces '**A Foreign Place**' and '**Life Without Buildings**' both previously unavailable on album, as well as favourites '**Ghosts**', '**Quiet Life**', '**Methods of Dance**' and '**Night Porter**'. The album reaches a climax with the 12" single version of '**The Art of Parties**'.

PERSONNEL: David Sylvian
Steve Jansen
Richard Barbieri
Mick Karn

TRACK LISTING: Side 1
Methods of Dance
Swing
Gentlemen Take Polaroids
Quiet Life

Side 2
A Foreign Place
Night Porter
My New Career
The Other Side of Life

CAT. No: VGD3510/VGDC3510

Side 3
Visions of China
Taking Islands in Africa
Ghosts
Sons of Pioneers

Side 4
Voices Raised in Welcome,
Hands Held in Prayer
Life Without Buildings
Talking Drum
Art of Parties

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Records

Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
Rattlesnakes
Polydor

OK consider this. If the Waterboys, U2, Echo and the rest represent the power of optimism, of human dignity over drudgery, of the shout above the whisper, then the opposite side of the coin surely belongs to the Velvet-spawned love-children, Orange Juice, Aztec Camera and Lloyd Cole and the Commotions.

Cole and his band, or an Englishman and for Glaswegians, didn't take the usual Postcard route to credibility; they used the highway of the majors. Regardless, they're here with a first album, appetites having been whetted by the single 'Perfect Skin', a song where a lean Lou Reed shook

The Go-Betweens
Spring Hill Fair
Sire

In these days of studio successes and the obligatory 12" single it's nice to know someone is making some real music. Sound like a plug? It is. Because everyone with even the makings of a record player should own — and play frequently — *Spring Hill Fair*.

'Bachelor Kisses' is a lovely, lovely song — for its content alone — but it isn't representative of the album (in fact it was recorded two months after and in a different place). The Go-Betweens have a certain awkwardness, aided and abetted by Grant McLennan's near-gasping vocals — there's an urgency to his phrasing that makes you wonder what the twist is next, how the song will end.

"Kick the fucking clergy out of their jobs and get on with the real world," says McLennan and 'Five Words' sort of chugs past. Complex, painful relationships/breakups are related ('Part Company', 'Slow Slow Music', 'Man O' Sand To Girl O' Sea') and reflected in the music. Probably the most stunning track is 'River Of Money', a slow, pounding spoken/sung narrative about a



Lloyd Cole

hands with Jim McGuinn's 12-string.

It clicked, and when things click on *Rattlesnakes* then we're in the presence of the transcendental. And that means 'Down On Mission Street'; Cole's voice aches, cracks and the band builds a C&W scene around one of the most delicious melodies in donkeys' years. Nothing could rival that, but 'Speedboat', 'Charlotte Street' and 'Patience' recall subliminal past classic rock 'n' roll ghosts that have been wonderfully resurrected by Cole's writing abilities and the Commotions' flawless, intuitive backing.

There are few real let-downs; the acoustic ballads of '2cv' and 'Are You Ready To Be Heartbroken' are the right side of precious and the supposed legendary single status soul of 'Forest Fire', although not the giant I expected, is a song, as the title states, that smoulders with inflammable intent.

So all in the garden is rosy? Well not quite, there's a snake in there. Cole is no perfect mind, he overdoes the cool as there's often a sense that he's self-consciously distancing himself from the music and drawing the lyric for added effect. So he seldom draws you into a song, the listener remains a bystander as he unravels his Lou Reed street-tired phraseology and name-drops people like Truman Capote, Arthur Lee, Norman Mailer and Leonard Cohen to reinforce his credibility.

Look Lloyd, forget those hacks, this year Enid Blyton is in. And anyway, who needs them? *Rattlesnakes* has the feel of something really special — so this is where to start the year.

George Kay

post-relationship deluge. Chilling.

I could go on — Lindy Morrison's great drumming, Robert Vickers' backbone bass, Robert Forster's lyrics, but why bother? Buy it and hear for yourself.

Fiona Rae

SPK
Machine Age Voodoo
WEA

Who are SPK? Sozialistische Patienten Kollektiv? SePuKu? Surgical Penis Klinik??

SPK, ex aesthetic terrorists and true bashers of metal, leap into the mainstream of pop with their first NZ-released album, *Machine Age Voodoo*. But *Machine Age Voodoo* is not a successful leap. Its songs have a feeling of sameness — continually similar, unfunky and plodding sequencer and drum machine rhythms, with occasional token metall perkussion.

Lyrics divide into either cliched metal age tales like 'Metropolis', bland incitements to dance ('High Tension': 'Be bop, be hip, hip hop, never stop. When you're hot, you're hot, and when you're not you're not.' WOW!) or mishmash combinations of both, as in the two singles off the album, 'Metal Dance' and 'Junk Funk'.

The relatively interesting and uncluttered 'Fire and Steel' is the best track, combining percussion and electronics better than the rest, which 'Metal Dance' seems to be the only track that at least wants to move at all.

Who are SPK? Peddlers of junk, but not funk and no longer "beating the violent and primitive heart of a controlled post-industrial society."

Paul McKessary

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Beggars Banquet