



ENGINES OF AGGRESSION Inhuman Nature (Priority Records)

Memo from the Ministry of the hard rocking. The quota for tortured lyrics has been over-filled. Tortured lyrics discuss society, alienation and societal disfunction, with singer continually raging with the aid of the machine. Danger to state minimal, due to soporific effect of relentless rhythm patterns and smooth production which leaves album sounding too produced and product like. Potential audience: denizens of cyberspace with microchips on shoulders. Should be avoided by fans of air guitar, as solos are at subsistence level. Devotees of EOA may be identified by robotic movements and a penchant for dark glasses, which hide the hideous neurosurgery scars required for eventual integration with the cyberindustrial collective. Objective: corrupt incorruptible icon figures and use music for future well known soft drink campaigns. Potential in music for use in evil industro militaristic complexes to increase productivity of work units. EOA,

though thought criminals of a most insidious nature, have the potential yet to make triple plus good citizens.

KEVIN LIST

SIMPLE MINDS Good News From The Next World (Virgin)

Simple Minds return, after a four year absence, to re-invent themselves, now that they've accepted and adapted to life without keyboardist Mick MacNeill. He left before their last album, 1991's *Real Life*, a record that suffered from Kerr and Burchill's attempts to prop up MacNeill's absence with some overly predicted keyboard based material.

Now Burchill is left to form the backbone of the songs. This has resulted in a welcome leaner and less lush sound and feel. Kerr's verses still ring with the bravado and romanticism of a non-intellectual made good, but scratch his surface and the aggression of 'Criminal World' and 'Seven Deadly Sins' reveal another dimension

to his writing. Carried on a superb lick from Burchill, 'My Life' boasts one of Kerr's most convincing and determined vocal assertions in a long time, while 'Hypnotised' is a beautifully resigned, atmospheric effort.

Elsewhere, the band's typical optimism holds sway in spirited, but not bombastic or over-the-top, songs like 'Great Leap Forward' and 'And the Band Played On'. It all adds up to pretty good news from a duo who've refound their direction and confidence when it looked as though they might have been content to wave from their castles.

GEORGE KAY

JOHN FRUSCIANTE Niandra Lades and Just A T-Shirt (American)

This is why you shouldn't take drugs, kids — you may end up like this. The simple story is Frusciante bailed on the Chili Peppers, hid out in a darkened room for a while, then laid down this — two albums worth of serious derangement via loads of sub-psychedelic guitar noodling and falsetto vocals. Half of it is untitled, half has titles like 'Your Pussy's Glued To A Building on Fire'. Serious critical opinion here seems to be *Niandra* is on that knife edge of genius and being impossible to listen to. As I have no rockist career to protect, I'll swing with the latter. Frusciante is novel and wacky at first, but segues nicely into grating, sad and annoying. If you dig lunatics with guitars, buy the new Daniel Johnston and Roky Erikson sides before you go near this.

KIRK GEE

MEGADETH Youthanasia (EMI)

Yehaaah, I'm headin' down the street, listening to Megadeath and dinging anything that comes my way. I've got a tank full of gas, a belly full of jelly and a head full of *Youthanasia*. There is a road every man must go down, and what better way to travel than in a Morris. In a strange and not particularly well linked way, Megadeath reminds one of a Morris — old, battle scarred and continually passed on the musical highway by flashy young upstarts. Also like a Morris, Megadeath frequently break down. The pit stops are due to guitar god Dave Mustaine's legendary 'love of life'. Luckily Megadeath are back with *Youthanasia*, thanks to Dave's ability to eat warm rooster (how that stops you taking drugs, I'll never know).

From the low points, Dave crafts epic tragedies in the mould of Virgil and Homer, but with a squeakier voice. *Youthanasia* is his latest Opus. Like the greats of classical lyric poetry, Dave's lyrics relate to the tragedy of the human condition, but are cunningly hidden

behind sordid tales of rock 'n' roll life and romps with zoo animals. When we hear that Dave has a monkey on his back we can but wonder at what's between his legs.

No need to wonder at what's on Megadeath's heads — it's hair, and plenty of it. Through their fluffy tresses, Megadeath find inspiration for guitar solos that give us all a little glimpse into eternity.

If there must be a quibble, it's why Megadeath felt the need to overdub a wailing police siren, as when driving with no rego — the last thing one needs to be reminded of is 'the man'... oh, hang on, didn't the tape run out on the last set of lights?

KEVIN LIST

STACK O'RELEASES (Infinite Zero)

Usually at this time of year there's not a whole bunch to buy outside of those fine Greatest Hits packages, so this first selection of discs from Mr Rubin and Mr Rollins' re-release venture is a welcome surprise and a pretty eclectic range. There's Devo's *Duty Now For the Future*, which still sounds both twisted and great. Weird spiraling synths somehow meld with pretty straight up guitar and a solid beat. It's sad that the drive of 'Pink Pussycat' and sheer tweakedness of 'Blockhead' later dissolved into weak, syndrum pop, so this reminder of how good Devo were is all the more important. There's also a couple of great bonus tracks, one of them being the Eno produced 'Penetration in the Centrefold', which is truly a wild moment.

Next up is Iceberg Slim's *Reflections*, and the wild moments just keep coming. Mr Slim is, of course, the author of such tomes as 'Pimp' and 'Mama Black Widow', and the source of Ice T's name and much of his attitude. *Reflections* features Iceberg reading four of his bits, with some very low key jazz backing. Once you get past the strange, fake English accent and the sheer kitsch of it all, the album's pretty good. Iceberg has a great spoken flow, and the stories (all in rhyme) are pretty engrossing, 'Durealla' in particular. This is definitely up there with Rudy Ray Moore, Blowfly and early Richard Pryor.

More modern, and a definite change of pace, is *Circular Temple*, by the Matthew Ship Trio. Shipp is one of the hottest young jazz pianists to emerge in a long while, and it's great to see this very wonderful 1990 recording readily available at last. Backed by a 10 ton rhythm section, in the form of drummer Whit Dickey and former Coltrane sideman William Parker on bass, Shipp is in full flight on this four piece suite. His style is incredibly fluid and seamless. He moves from gentle passages into more intense, dissonant stuff, without losing

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