



this CD's other selections as well. Roderick sings, "You play hard to want" during "Delicate Hands," then – with an opinion every honest man can relate to – he admits, "Bride and bridle are too close in a man's mind" on the song "Bride and Bridle." Due to its short length, though, *Ultimatum* ultimately leaves one wanting more.

xLOOKING FORWARDx
THE PATH WE TREAD [FACEDOWN]
[Fans of Gorilla Biscuits, Good Riddance and Minor Threat take note.]



For the uninitiated, xLooking Forward is a straight-edge Christian hardcore band from Maryland. Sure, I suppose people

having qualms with hardcore/punk bands that blatantly sing about their faith and beliefs, feeling the term "Christian hardcore" oxymoronic, might write these guys off right away. But those of a more open-minded nature will appreciate xLFx's undeniable talent, dedication and heart that all ooze throughout the tight hardcore found on the group's third LP (and first for Facedown), *The Path We Tread*. This stuff's just plain good, recalling (musically) such heavyweights as Good Riddance and Gorilla Biscuits. These songs, namely "Heroes of Your Revolution," "Displacement Theory," and the veritable *tour de force* of the instrumental "Gimme Two Steps" and "War Tells All" (the two songs closing out the album), are truly powerful: relentless, fast and pounding, but still infused with great, memorable melodies. Lyrically, as aforementioned, the guys' faith isn't in question, yet it's not overbearing, either, as they tackle real issues, sometimes looking inward and often conveying meaningful messages about the importance of living a purposeful life and the value of friends and family – things to which we can all relate.

-Janelle Jones



MADE IN MEXICO
ZODIAC ZOO [SKIN GRAFT]
[Fans of Arab on Radio, Plot to Blow Up the Eiffel Tower and Sonic Youth take note.]



Made in Mexico is the sonic equivalent to a flailing orgy in the palace, only to end in a mass of bodily fluids. *Zodiac Zoo* hearkens back to a first listen of Sonic Youth's *Confusion Is Sex*, only with better production. But what more can you expect from a group who has roamed the streets in bands like Arab on Radar, La Machine, and Bossman? The guitars speak to us like a schizophrenic clown with Tourette's syndrome as each drum beat stings our earlobes. And Rebecca Mitchell's

occasional vocal line gives us no guideline or reassurance as to where the song is going, leaving us as lost as when we first entered these catacombs of noise. Fueling oneself by New York art punk at 3 a.m. will only produce wicked results, and songs like "Clockwork" and "Black Rabbit" are Made in Mexico's derogatory reactions. *Zodiac Zoo* is like being flicked in the eye: It hurts like hell, but you let it happen to you again.

-Andrew Duncan

MINUS STORY
NO REST FOR GHOSTS [JAGJAGUWAR]
[Fans of the Flaming Lips, Microphones and all things eerily gorgeous take note.]



In an effort to relieve some pent-up guilt, I shall come clean: I very nearly gave this disc a mere cursory listen and chalked it up to generic indie rock. Oh, the shame! I now indeed know the error of my ways, and the reward for realizing that error is an enormous one. In an era in which the album has fallen by the wayside with the advent of music downloading, even the most liberal of music journalists sometimes catch themselves looking and listening only for that immediately accessible nugget of ear candy. But in doing so, great

eyecandy



NEW ORDER
ITEM: A COLLECTION AND NEW ORDER STORY DVD [RIANO]
One of the more perverse pleasures of any music fan is an insistence on maintaining contrary opinions in defiance of critical or popular consensus. This is what makes New Order a rather odd bird in the rock pantheon.

Emerging in the early '80s from the wreckage of the justly celebrated Joy Division, the Manchester foursome more or less founded dance rock, crafting slick and synth-y singles that were easy to sneer at but impossible not to dance to. And the fact of the matter is that those who love them are absolutely right to do so, while those who loathe them are equally well justified in their stance. New Order are vexingly difficult to like in an ironic, hipster sort of way, and yet substantial or not, their music is catchy enough that you'll have a lot of trouble turning off the highly hummable greatest-hits video collection that makes up the first disc in this two-DVD set. In short, this may be the one case in the history of rock music where the critics' assessment is pretty much dead-on.

Which, frankly, makes the second disc of this set

a bit of a disappointment. An extended version of the documentary that originally appeared on VHS years ago – apparently this is the relatively rare, full-length laserdisc edition, for those of you keeping track – the *New Order Story* is a watchable but far from revolutionary band bio that will confirm everything you think about the band, regardless of how pro or con you may be. It's a bit of a revelation to see how neatly these guys dressed twenty years back, and you can see all this as a window into the future of where indie rock might go once it shakes off the shackles of its current, slavish Joy Division fixations.

On the whole, however, New Order fans will eat this up. New Order detractors will wonder what all the fuss is about, and mildly indifferent types will pass a pleasant few hours with the discs before setting them aside and forgetting all about them. -Steven Hanna



NEW YORK DOLLS
ALL DOLLED UP DVD [MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS]
Long before androgyny became commonplace in rock 'n' roll, the pioneering New York Dolls proudly walked the earth. This New York band dressed like women, looked like dudes (who just happened to be

dressed like women), and played a raunchy brand of guitar rock reminiscent of The Rolling Stones.

Led by the showboating David Johansen, the original five-piece is captured here in living black and white. Videod by rock photographer Bob Gruen, this film is just what his camera caught – warts and all – back in the '70s. It's especially fun to watch the group working out its performance kinks, particularly at historic venues like Max's Kansas City and The Whiskey a Go Go. But its best moments by far do not take place in clubs, but rather in a New York airport terminal. The montage of shocked-looking octogenarians watching as these hooker-clothed rockers pass them by is simply priceless.

Even so, it's a little sad to watch this film with the knowledge of what would happen next. Tragically, guitarist Johnny Thunders eventually OD'd on heroin, drummer Jerry Nolan died of a stroke, and most recently, bassist Arthur Kane passed away due to complications from leukemia. Today, remaining Dolls Sylvian (guitar) and Johansen carry on touring as the New York Dolls – but it's just not the same. Though songs like "Personality Crisis," "Trash," and "Jet Boy" sound as hip today as they did back in the '70s, the New York Dolls will never be as exciting or as shocking as they were way back then. The sound and video quality of *All Dolled Up* certainly leaves something to be desired, so unless you're already a diehard fan, it's best to just steer clear of this work.

-Dan MacIntosh