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## GRANT HART - HOT WAX

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### Album Details

**Artist:** [Grant Hart](#)  
**Album:** Hot Wax  
**Label:** [MVD](#)  
**Year of Release:** 2009  
**ME Rating:** ★★★★★  
**Reviewed by:** [Mike Wood](#)  
 on 2009-10-01  
**Viewed:** 15 times

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Aside from Bigfoot, UFO's and WMD in Iraq, one of the biggest current myths is that Bob Mould was the best songwriter in Husker Du. Clearly he was in the beginning, when songs like "In a Free Land," "Everything Falls Apart" and "Chartered Trips" set standard for the angry, wounded, soulful rock that devolved eventually into emo. But Grant Hart was a singular talent as well, and his overshadowing by Mould is less a case of George Harrison bad luck than it was Mouldian monomania. Had Hart been allowed more than a few songs per disc in the later years, we might have been spared the maudlin "Candy Apple Grey" (whose best songs are Hart's) and the most flaccid swan song since the Who's "It's Hard," that being "Warehouse."

Addictions and other lingering demons have prevented Hart from being prolific as a solo, but his catalog is worth digging up for its wit, biting sense of pop hooks, and at time bewildering experimentation. "Hot Wax" is his first solo record since 1989's "Intolerance" (though he has intermittently recorded a few records with Nova Mob since) and features all that is great and frustrating about Grant Hart. Half the songs here are memorable gems that will remain in your head for weeks; the rest is kinda aimless, even formless tunes that remind one of the dangers of recording all the instruments yourself--there is no one to stop you from making bad choices.

That said, the prime cuts: "You're The Reflection of the Moon on the Water," "Schoolbuses are for Children," and Charles Hollis Jones" are full of hooks, lyrics that skirt the edges of both poetry and lullabies, and that sense of cheerful catharsis that has been the hallmark of his writing. Other songs, like "California Zephyr" and "Narcissus Narcissus," could have used harder riffs and better bass to help them rise above the rather tepid attempt at an epic voyage vibe. Disappointing too are the final two tracks, beat-less, passionless numbers that, with titles like "I Knew All About You Since Then" and "My Regrets," had me hoping for some of the dark-edged romanticism of older songs like "No Promise Have I Made" or "2541."

In all, "Hot Wax" is welcome, as is Grant Hart, anytime. Like Clarisse Starling, the world is much better with him in it. He clearly shows he still has enough of his gifts to get something great down on tape. The sloppiness and wanderlust of his weaker songs are just part of the package.

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