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Grant Hart - Hot Wax

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Morning Magazine,

Author

Jasmine Hughes

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Hot Wax is the first album since 1999's Good News for Modern Man from Grant Hart, previously drummer and co-songwriter/singer for influential American band Hüsker Dü. Since Hüsker Dü's demise Hart has been decidedly less prolific than co-songwriter Bob Mould and while his newest album Hot Wax isn't quite a revelation, it does demonstrate what a pity Hart's lack of output has been.

Hot Wax was recorded over the past few years, in both Montreal and Hart's hometown of Minneapolis, with members of Godspeed You! Black Emperor and Silver Mt. Zion assisting. Recorded by Howard Bilerman, former member of Arcade Fire, the album has a 1960s-esque garage pop sound. Hot Wax is an interesting album sprinkled with enjoyable melodies but never goes beyond this to become something truly memorable.

Opening track 'You're the Reflection of the Moon on the Water' – a song that seems to call for both a leather jacket and a pair of go-go boots – has a swagger that unfortunately doesn't carry on into the rest of the album. Songs 'Barbara' & 'Sailor Jack' do have a certain Kinks English Pop charm but don't have enough power to be particularly resonant. Hart has claimed Patti Smith was a primary influence on this album and although I do hear some sounds akin to Patti's previous collaborators, Blue Oyster Cult; I don't hear the connection to Smith herself, either melodically or lyrically.

All up, Hot Wax is an album that is enjoyable and suggests great possibilities; but that is less than what I would have hoped for considering the 10 year delay and Hart's history as a songwriter. Hot Wax is definitely worth a listen though and leaves me hoping that the next Grant Hart album won't require such a wait.

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