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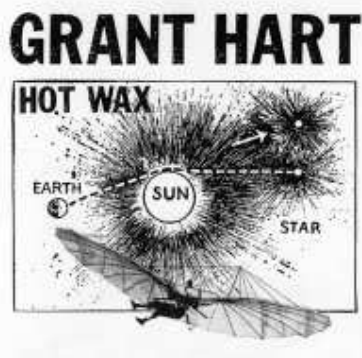
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Grant Hart: "Hot Wax" (album review)



In the post-Husker Du world it's undeniably Bob Mould who has been the busiest. But it would be an unforgivable mistake to forget about the other talent who shared the songwriter and vocal duties with that legendary band.

I came to Husker Du late, having been in high school at the beginning of the '90s, the band was already defunct by the time I became seriously musically aware, so my introduction to them was through Mould's work with Sugar. I

soaked it all up, picking up every Husker Du release I could get my clammy teenage hands on. Imagine my surprised when I realized that it wasn't my new hero Mould who was responsible for the buzzsaw singalongs and power pop gems that I grew to love so much, it was Grant Hart.

Hart returned this week with the release of his new studio album *Hot Wax*.

This set of 9 tracks, recorded in Minneapolis and Montreal (some with Godspeed You! Black Emperor), represents the first new album from the former Husker Du drummer since 1999's *Good News For Modern Man*.

There's a detectable '60s influence on this record that really hasn't reared itself to this extent before. Tracks like the unforgettable "You're the Reflection of the Moon On the Water" and "Sailor Jack" feature a psychedelic keyboard sound atop the expected power pop foundation. A simple '60s pop melody lends "Barbara" a childlike innocence from another time and place. It's a Phil Spector-esque wall of sound that slaps you in the face with sugary goodness on "Charles Hollis Jones".

"I Knew All About You Since Then" provides the album's most unanticipated moment. The track sees Hart crooning, backed by an almost Elvis Costello-like smoky jazz sound.

Slowing things down on "Schoolbuses Are for Children", Hart sings his lungs out on the slower track. He does the same on the album closer "My Regrets", seemingly leaving everything he's got on the DAT.

It's the hook-laden guitar pop that endears *Hot Wax* to us though. Tracks like "Narcissus Narcissus" and "California Zephyr" that will ceaselessly rattle around in your skull.

Couple this with my Replacements fanaticism and it really makes me wish that I was born 10 years earlier and in Minneapolis to see these incomparable acts in their prime.

Best tracks: "You're the Reflection of the Moon On the Water", "California Zephyr"

Track listing for *Hot Wax*:

- You're the Reflection of the Moon On the Water
- Barbara
- Charles Hollis Jones
- Schoolbuses Are for Children
-

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