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Grant Hart – 'Hot Wax' (Condor/MVD)

CD Reviews

Written by Johnny H

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Quick history lesson for you, Grant Hart was once drummer of legendary umlaut using punk/alternative rock legends Hüsker Dü. This band quite possibly single-handedly influenced more scenes in their recording history than any other band known to man thanks to their diverse musical outputs.

When you mention Hüsker Dü you have the extremes of US hardcore punk at one end of their influence to Americana bands such as The Hold Steady at the other end of the spectrum

When Hüsker Dü split in 1987, Grant Hart took his next musical steps to being a guitarist and frontman through initially a series of solo EP's and then the 'Intolerance' album before his tenure with Nova Mob in the early to mid nineties. Since Nova Mob folded Grant has from time to time dallied with various solo musical outputs the last one being released in 1999.

History lesson over, 'Hot Wax' is the here and now and is nine tracks of diverse mind expanding pop rock that has the heavy musk scent of Sixties garage rock and psychedelia all over it. Recorded in Montreal and Minneapolis, Hart has also assembled a diverse array of supporting musicians to help deliver the 'Hot Wax' sound ranging from members of Godspeed You Black Emperor to Rank Strangers and Silver Mt Zion.

Oddly the overall vibe of this album reminds me very much of Scott Weiland's '12 Bar Blues' solo album, where you can hear an artist experimenting and taking risks with their music (that's not to say it sounds like said album OK). 'School Buses Are For Children' in particular has that stamp of quality song written all over it, sounding like something that Burt Bacharach might have penned not so long ago with a certain Elvis Costello.

Elsewhere album opener 'You're The Refection Of The Moon On The Water' shuffles in on a 'Quick One' era Who beat that sets your Chelsea boots and sixteen inch bottoms tapping, whilst tracks like 'Barbara' and 'My Regrets' dip their toes into both Barrett and Bowie's musical bathwater without ever sounding like anything other than classic Grant Hart.

As Hart's sixth solo release overall 'Hot Wax' stands as a compelling and rewarding release for you the listener that immerses you in an orgy of sound and melody. Take one listen to 'Narcissus. Narcissus' and hear musical history unfolding in your living room, splendid stuff indeed.

In short 'Hot Wax' is quite possibly the most surprising album I have received since Über Röck started, and well worth experimenting with.

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