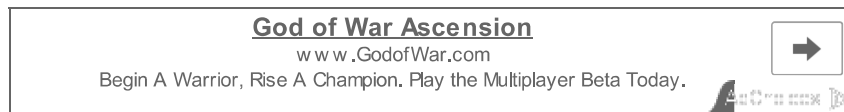


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## Jah Wobble & Keith Levene – Yin & Yang

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### The Sum of Its Parts

*Yin & Yang* is the latest release from Jah Wobble and Keith Levene, a couple of musicians who've been in the industry for too long not to be of note. You may remember a little British punk band called the Sex Pistols from several years ago. Well, after that band's inevitable dissolution, front man John Lydon (aka Johnny Rotten) formed a new group, Public Image Ltd, including bassist Jah Wobble and guitarist Keith Levene.

The history lesson may lead the reader to believe that this is some kind of punk record, which is not quite the case. *Yin & Yang* does evoke a punk feeling at times, but in more of a Velvet Underground way than anything else. Several songs, such as "Vampires," incorporate a kind of spoken poetry lyrical accompaniment that is reminiscent of Patti Smith. But when all is said and done, this is a record that doesn't align itself with any genre.

At times pop, at other times jazz fusion, and occasionally downright obnoxious, this is an album that a lot of people are not going to like. An opening track that shouts "Fucking yin and fucking yang," into the listener's ear is pretty bold, and it's the kind of bold that is tough to enjoy after the first, second or third listen. Thankfully, that tone doesn't persist throughout the entire album, or even the entire song, but therein lies another of *Yin & Yang*'s problems.

"Jags and Staffs" is a 10-minute musical exploration punctuated by poetic verses; it tries to be epic, but really it's just long. "Mississippi," a slightly weird pop song that sounds something like the Beach Boys in a meat grinder, is probably one of the album's best moments. The cover of the Beatles' "Within You, Without You" is... well, a cover of that song. The record goes up, and then it goes down.

*Yin & Yang* incorporates elements of a dozen genres, but it doesn't cook them. Collaborations between long time musicians such as these are often hit or miss, but they can work beautifully. Brian Eno is famous for making these off-kilter collaborations work beautifully, but Wobble and Levene don't seem to have it locked down just yet. When every other song sounds like it belongs on a different album, something has gone awry.