



progressively heightened expectations and produced an impossible

like crap. All these lows are belied by the Black Maria's high-voltage music, fueled by the ridiculous energy of drummer Theo

work it's ever done, but there's plenty to be said for putting out consistently good records for 20 years. — *Jeremy Willets*

# REWIND

## WEEN

*Shinola Vol. 1*  
(MVD/Chocodog)  
★★★ 1/2

*Shinola Vol. 1* is a previously Internet-only/private-label Ween outtake collection that's just been reissued with full-fledged retail distribution. This disc is so consistently inventive and masterfully crafted that it commands acknowledgment of Gene and Dean Ween's brilliance as artists. Much of this CD's remarkable-ness (and much of this oddball band's previous critical acclaim) justly can be

attributed to the seeming effortless-ness of Ween's mastery of a schizophrenic gamut of musical styles, wildly incorporating unorthodox rock instrumentation and pitch-shifted vocals. Particularly when viewed as castoff tracks, these songs (especially "Gabrielle" and "The Rift") also prove Ween's status as powerfully infectious songwriters.

Ween has been easy to dismiss as an empty, bratty novelty act. Ween's weakest link has been where it relied on humor unlikely to amuse anyone beyond a 14-

year-old-male mentality, thus quickly rendering such songs boringly unfunny and annoying. Fortunately, such simplistic, adolescent, "aren't we funny and shocking because we use profanity" lameness is limited to the "Big Fat Fuck" track (although the profanity-free, not-bad "Tastes Good on th' Bun" is also supported by thin creative ice). Still, even at its least clever, Ween demonstrates an astounding level of imagination and ingenuity that's sadly far too rare nowadays. — *Michael David Toth*

