



Artist: Ween
Album: Shinola Vol. 1
Style: Indie Rock
Street Date: September 19, 2006
Label: Chocodog

Grade: D-
Recommended songs: "Boys Club", if I have to pick one

I'm not going to wax philosophic here, you can simply skip this disc. Just don't skip the review because Ween is usually a highly cool band. Please read on because it'll make me feel a lot better about being such a jerk.

Normally an independent rock band that sticks to the college circuit and music fests, Ween has historically taken a lot of chances with their music. They had an exceptional

country music album back in 1996 called "12 Golden Country Greats" that dealt almost exclusively with the upside of drinking, drugs, and bad sex. Absolutely heehaw-larious. They are a less melodic version of Weezer, usually successfully blending a great sense humor, geeky lyrics, and low-fidelity production values with catchy and sometimes strange music.

However, this album is just a pale version of that. It's a very choppy experience for the listener as Dean and Gene Ween hop all over the spectrum, playing emo rock ("Gabrielle"), country, progressive rock, power pop ("Did You See Me?"), and even lounge ("Transitions"). I've heard all this before and I've heard it better. The album comes off as a mess of leftovers slapped together half-heartedly with a smattering of shaky humor. When they do finally hit their groove at track 7 ("How High Can You Fly?") and track 8 ("Transitions"), Ween resorts to lyrical and musical repetition. It reminds me of a Saturday Night Live skit. One thing works, so let's just do it over and over and over until the coolness is all gone. "Monique The Freak" (track 11) is a pretty accurate Prince rip-off which is the saddest complimentary phrase I have ever had to give out. Yeah, and then track 9 ("Israel") with a rabbi chanting a blessing to a lounge beat? That just makes me angry.

The production quality is really sub-par and changes from track to track. Maybe I got a bad disc, but it was quite fuzzed out. In the end, it really didn't matter because this album is exactly what independent music should NOT be. Ween is very experienced in the alternative musical style and shouldn't let tripe like this out.

Related fixes for the musical junkie:

- Ween – "12 Golden Country Greats"
- My Morning Jacket – "Z"
- The Rakes – "Capture/Release"
- Brakes – "Give Blood"

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