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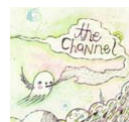
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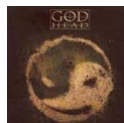
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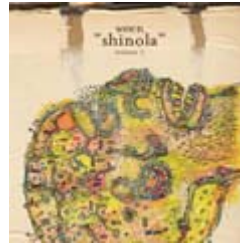


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Ween
Shinola Vol. 1
Chocodog

Rating: 8/10 ?



For the typical rock band with twenty years of recordings, it's not hard to gather rarities, remixes, and throw away tracks. It is even easier to slop them onto a play list and call it an album. In fact, no one needs to worry about quality control because it will be assuredly revered by their massive fan base as gold. For those who know Ween and their constant dodging of music dichotomy, it is not surprising that their "B-sides" collection, called *Shinola Vol. 1*, has the musical professionalism and composition of a "Best Hits" collection.

Marketing executives hate Ween because they don't know how to classify them. They are not even sure who their target market is. It could range from 40-year-old Jethro Tull fans to twenty something cynical bastards. Virtually every classification available under the broad umbrella of "rock" (experimental, alternative, funk, alternative, jam, emo, jazz, parody) has been used to generalize the group, and I dare say that Ween pride themselves on the basis that no one can accurately pigeonhole them. I must believe that the "throw away" tracks that comprise *Shinola Vol. 1* were finalized in previous albums and tossed at the last minute to avoid any such classification; they didn't toss them because they sucked. I can see how the alternative ultra pop song "Gabrielle" was yanked at one point because it might have actually given them Top 40 radio air play.

The real gem of *Shinola Vol. 1* is "Monique the Freak," which is about six minutes of pure funk and guitar rifts, suitable for play alongside classic hits "Push the Little Daises"(1992) and "Voodoo Lady"(1994). As outrageous as some of their work has come across, Ween have the unique ability to touch upon the mundane aspects of reality. No other song can exemplify the feeling of downing a whole can of Pringles and walking up some stairs as the circus track "Big Fat Fuck". The album contains obnoxiously entertaining songs like "Boys Club" and "The Rift"; but the tracks that make this album worth listening to are the beautiful ballads "I Fell in Love Today," "Someday," and "Do You See Me". Each of these songs brought a heartfelt emotion that I never thought a band of twisted pranksters like Ween were capable of producing.

Unlike most "rarity and remix" albums, *Shinola Vol. 1* is for more than just Ween's fan base. It can be appreciated by anyone. My only disappointment is the lack of any corresponding information to indicate which album sessions originally spawned which tracks, and the stories behind leaving them on the cutting room floor in the first place. From a band like Ween, such background information would almost certainly prove as entertaining as the album itself.

As a final word of warning, do not count Ween down and out. This is far from a "scrap" album or an indication of retirement into side project heaven. According to their website the band is working non stop in a barn in central Pennsylvania in an effort to someday release a full new LP, which, if *Shinola Vol. 1* is any indication, will leave them with plenty more b-sides and junk tracks to spare.

Reviewed by **Ted Nixon**

A contributing writer based in Oakland, California, Ted Nixon covers hip-hop releases for LAS.