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Ween

The Friends EP

Review by Gary Hill

I had heard of Ween before, but never actually heard them. I have to say, I didn't know what to expect from them, but even if I had, this would have surprised me. The music is weird, but quite cool. It almost feels a bit silly, in a good way, like Barenaked Ladies. This thing would almost qualify as prog rock. Certainly a couple songs here fit into that category. Frankly, I don't have a clue what kind of music this is, unless it's prog rock. We've got progressive rock elements, fuzzy psychedelia, club textures, reggae and jazz all mixing into one of the more unique sounds you'll ever hear. I can see why these guys have built up a following. They are cool!



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Track by Track Review

Friends

A processed voice leads this one in. That, along with the lush, keyboard dominated techno mix on the early segments might make you think you've put on a quirky neo-prog jam. As they shift out into the chorus, though, it takes on a club sort of sound and that is mixed with the earlier elements to create a unique sound. They alternate between these sounds as they carry forward. The lyrical content of this song, while perhaps a bit simplistic, is uplifting.

I Got to Put the Hammer Down

This comes in with a fuzzy, funky, keyboard texture. As the vocals enter they accompanied by a cool funky riff. The cut feels like a cross between funk, old-school fuzz psychedelia and club sounds. This is a killer. The motif might be a little weird, but this really rocks out.

King Billy

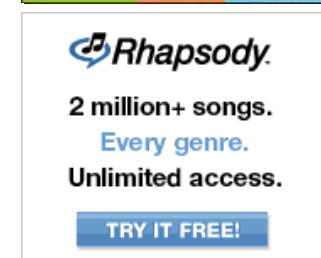
An odd little, tune, this seems to combine a weird alternative sound with a reggae sort of song. This feels a little silly, but it's also very cool. It might be my favorite track on the disc. There is this great proggy keyboard oriented jam later and it gives way to what feels like an electronic mariachi band for a time.

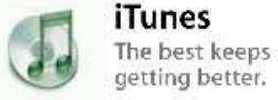
Light Me Up

This starts off a bit like Santana and then turns into a Latin tinged jam that's a powerhouse. This is one of the most "normal" tracks on the disc. It's still got a bit of a "twist" to the sound, but this could almost be a classic rock song from any number of acts. It's also one of my favorites on show here.

Slow Down Boy

In keeping with the title, this is a slower tune. It has a definite pop rock feel to it and is another that's nearly "normal." I hear a bit of Roy Orbison in this tune, but also the Psychedelic Furs and Squeeze. It's another intriguing piece that leaves you wanting more.





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