



Ween

The Friends EP CD (Chocodog)

Wow, another little (20-minute, 5-song) self-release from Dean and Gene, and it starts with a bang! The title track is an outright disco number...it's cutesy and even clubby, in the worst over-the-top sense. Catchy track, too, and this one proves that Ween is capable of so very much musically. And you can be sure it's firmly tongue-in-cheek, naturally. Apparently, these cuts are odds and ends, as they were recorded at different times, and it sounds this way, though it's no more schizophrenic than any other Ween release. "King Billy" is an ode to some great reggae/dub masters, and sways with a rocksteady beat and some farty little noises. Prime! Jammy and hammy is the way, and "Light Me Up" is a Latin-flavored number full of boastful optimism from the dealer's point of view. Tony Montana, anyone? And the final song, "Slow Down Boy" is a schmaltzy slice of baroque pop (complete with faux-English accent). Masterful. Never underestimate the power of a little ween!

-Rob Wickett

Rating: 4

The Friends EP

Ween (Chocodog)

This 5-song EP begins with a remix of the song "Friends" from 2007's full length release. The uninitiated neophyte will probably not grapple the tongue-in-cheek nature that often defines Ween

and will immediately – within the first 2 bars of music – arrive at the, perhaps correct, conclusion that this is *the* gayest song in the history of mankind. In fact, it couldn't be any gayer if it put on rainbow-colored stockings and assless Cher chaps and started voguing in a strobe light to Wham's Greatest Hits. But familiarity with Ween's sense of humor make the song a riot to listen to. The following track, "I Got to Put the Hammer Down," is a blubbering, techno-inspired ditty with typical Ween cheesiness slathered all over it. "King Billy" and "Light Me Up" reprise the false Mexican accent employed so successfully on other Ween tunes of yore, like "Buenos Tardes Amigo," but, in the case of the former, laid over a Rastafarian calypso vibe and with noisy, out-of-place guitar and synth solos that one cannot help but make ugly sex faces to. The latter, probably the best song on the EP, is a Latin-infused jaunt that recalls the best of Ween and once again demonstrates why the best bands are free to explore any musical style they want without seeming pretentious or intrusive. It's probably a good thing Dean and Gene Ween saved "Slow Down Boy" 'til the end of the EP, as it actually made me kind of uncomfortable. The lyrics are, apparently, about a gay love between a photographer and a young male supermodel that are sung with Gene's best Duran Duran impersonation, and the whole thing pretty much crosses that line all hetero men place upon themselves with the lyric in the bridge, "I've watched you from the back seat. Crying as he walked away. I see beauty in the future. Lay back and let him blow you away." Ick. But, hey, it's Ween. If they're not making you cringe from time to time, they're not staying on the edge. In all, this little EP doesn't do much to either help or harm their reputation as one of the most creative and fun bands out there.

-Brad Linzy

Rating: 3