

CD reviews

KONE CIRRHOTIC PSYCHOTIC (THE RECORD COMPANY)

California-based multi-instrumentalist Phil Western is probably best known as half of experimental electronica groups Download and Plateau.



But on this solo recording, Western more than proves that his prowess as a programmer and composer may even surpass these better-known, critically-acclaimed projects. Kone's premise is music created with only a simple setup of primitive electronic gear - a kind of no frills, balls-out approach to techno, you might say. And with such tight grooves as the almost acidic 'Movies On My House,' this idea works quite well. Recalling the robotic demeanor of Kraftwerk, and gene-splicing in some glitchy, minimalist funk by way of Detroit, these crisp and accessible tracks thump and sizzle, while also summoning some nicely ambient textures along the way (as on the lovely retro-stylings of 'Terrible News').

'Mound (Fully Conscious Mix)' is a jagged and noisy eardrum-rattler that pummels like prime Aphex Twin, and similarly, 'Whoa War Wow,' like most of this recording, is actually too manic for most dance floors. Consider it prime electronic listening music for those with a hankering for something more, eh, corrosive. A really fine recording here, and respect to Mr. Western on a job well done, indeed.

- Todd Zachritz
RATING: 4

PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE SOUND NO WONDERLAND (PROPHASE MUSIC)

Reissued from an apparently quite rare mammoth double-LP, this well-stuffed CD revisits a wild and woolly psychedelische-kraut monsterpiece from this Chicago collective. Gathering their farthest out-there guitar drones, noisy garage riffs, and freak-space-punk jams, PCS harvest a rich and deeply visceral strain of darkly-lit stoner head music. If names like Can, Acid Mothers Temple, Amon Duul, or Hawkwind mean anything to you, then this groovy set of tunes



potatoes here are the long, enveloping motorik fuzz-jams that demand head-nodding and suggest some rather wicked altered states. Primal, powerful, and trance-inducing, 'No Wonderland' is a real triumph for you "heads."

- Todd Zachritz
RATING: 4

SPRING HEEL JACK SONGS AND THEMES (THIRSTY EAR)

The UK duo of Ashley Wales and John Coxon have undergone quite a rebirth and, indeed, a near-total re-invention in recent years.

Depending on your tolerance for out-jazz and avante garde improv, this can be seen as either a good or a bad thing. Taking their initial (jungle electronica) roots into account, I'd say it's quite a monolithic progression. Enlisting the assistance of esteemed instrumentalists like trumpeter Roy Campbell, Jr. and guitarist Jason Spaceman (Spiritualized), 'Songs And Themes' is a masterful sort of ambient jazz, highly organic in sound, but augmented with a subtle touch of sampling and electronic effects. Noteworthy are the classy string/brass overplay on 'At Long Last', or the dissonant skronk of 'Antiphon.' There's beauty and lush melodicism running all through the album, and an artery of dark noise that filters through now and again.

Topping it all off, 'Garlands' is a powerful and sinister post-industrial take on a timeless seasonal theme. Simultaneously encompassing sounds both lovely and bent, 'Songs And Themes' is a masterstroke.

- Todd Zachritz
RATING: 5



will easily satisfy. Guest appearances by new-jack hippie-folksters like Devendra Banhart or Josephine Foster are token, but the real meat and

TAD BUSTED CIRCUITS AND RINGING EARS (MVD VISUAL)



The life and times of the grunge-era Seattle band once deemed "too ugly for MTV" is revisited here in a sympathetic and thoroughly

well-produced documentary. Thankfully, input from the band is included, and fellow period scenesters like members of Nirvana, Soundgarden, and Mudhoney all contribute their thoughts and reflections on Tad's 'heavier than God' sound. The band's rise on the influential Sub Pop Records label in the late 80s is detailed here, as is the major label courting that inevitably came and contributed to the band's quiet demise. From the best of times to the worst, these grizzled rockers rode the Seattle grunge wave and subsequently imploded through a series of bad business choices, drug addiction, and personal strife. Amidst this all, some rather classic noise-addled rock excesses were produced, and this DVD is a definitive look at one of the more interesting Northwest acts of the era. The inclusion of Tad's promo videos is an added bonus.

Essential for fans, and pretty interesting even for those merely curious.

- Rob Wickett
RATING: 3

MINISTRY COVER UP (13TH PLANET)

Being a bit of a conspiracy (i.e. sad but true reality) buff myself, I was disappointed to learn that Al Jourgensen may be permanently abandoning his 28-year-long, New-World-Order-exposing pet project, Ministry, for the greener pastures of producing, collaborating, and running his "13th Planet" record label. If this is true, and he doesn't decide to go on one of those permanent "farewell" tours, then Cover Up, a collection of cover tunes spanning the 8-track and vinyl era, may end up being Ministry's swan song. Kind of a sour note to go out on, in my

