

STUDENT LIFE

Bright 'Futures' for Jimmy Eat World

Review by Aaron J. Amendola
staff writer

Anyone trying to call Jim Adkins and the rest of Jimmy Eat World another fizzling punk/emo band of the late nineties and early millennium will soon be eating their words. In their sophomore effort "Futures," they show as much class in their music as a new age "Pomp and Circumstance." Showing more confidence with a new label as well as Gil Norton, an experienced rock producer (Foo Fighters) helping them, Jimmy Eat World has put together some of their best work.

Opening the album with the title track "Futures," the band sets off a more serious tone for the album than their self-titled work has. The very first lyrics are "I always believed in futures/ I hope for better in November," getting political right out of the gate. Is it any wonder that the album is being released mere weeks before an election? The politics in the track are laced with the same sugar pop riffs you came to find in their previous album but that's where it ends. Sure, there's a few prerequisite flat-out rock anthems like "Pain" and "Just Tonight," but the rest of the cuts are layered, intricate songs that really make you go somewhere out of your mind. In the end, that's what the album really is about: Escapism.

Ambient tunes like "Night Drive" really speak to people with it's haunting and also (dare I say?) sexy rhythm. Adkins' quiet yet powerful vocals really transport the listener to the situation he was in when he wrote the song. The deliberate building crescendo of the song is constructed in a perfect harmony, almost like a musical trance. Other more melodic tracks, like "23," capture what Jimmy Eat World was like back in the late nineties when they were still writing songs like "Lucky Denver Mint:" introspective, smart, and inspired. With the 7:23 running time, you can tell

Adkins is taking his time, developing his feelings into a whole complete song with heartfelt vocals. It's risks like writing partially inaccessible tracks like this that keep Jimmy Eat World such an interesting band. Put these songs on in a dark room and lay back; it's an experience akin to transcendence.

"Drugs or Me" is a real departure for the band. Almost dominated by a piano, the song is 6 minutes and 25 seconds of what Jimmy Eat World does best: emotionally charged tunes with lyrics that capture Adkins' soul. It's essentially a song that is a cry for help and you can't help but sympathize with Jim. If you thought the band wouldn't progress past sugarcoated cuts like "The Middle," give this a spin.

With an album like this, I'd be surprised if the band doesn't get more recognition. In a world dominated by Britney Spears, reality shows, and a world consumed by appearances, Jimmy Eat World braves their ventures by not conforming to a new sound, but by re-inventing themselves while sounding oddly familiar. If the album weren't so good, none of this would matter, but the album is amazing. Not only are the songs memorable and catchy, they make you think and these lyrics will keep with you. Adkins writes the lyrics that we want to speak but are always too shy to let flow past our lips. There's a certain honesty to his words that make the songs connect with you just a little more than any other song normally would.

Jimmy Eat World is a real band; there's a real singer and real people playing instruments. None of the studio constructed stuff you hear incessantly on the radio like Hilary Duff or the dreaded Ashlee Simpson. Do yourself a favor and pick this album up. Better yet, download it off Napster for free. Last I checked, "Futures" was going for \$11.99 at Best Buy and that's just down the road. Take the trip. Buy the album. Escape.

Eminem vs. Jackson: Does anyone care?



MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE.COM

Eminem's new music video makes fun of Michael Jackson and is stirring up controversy.

By Ben Wener
The Orange County Register
(KRT)

Despite what fine-crazy folks at the FCC want you to believe, nothing in entertainment is that outrageous these days. Not really. Not anymore.

Breast-flashing, foul language on the free airwaves, rockers putting down the president, barely censored scenes of bachelor parties on Fox - sing along now ... these are a few of my favorite things. Everything that instantly stirs absurd morning-news outcry is so commonplace and calculated in our post-Madonna, reality-show-saturated world, one in which smart people (and me) actually tune in to see if that witty lothario Flavor Flav will succeed at getting it on with man-size Teutonic tart Brigitte Nielsen on "The Surreal Life."

We are born suckers, hungry for lame-brained sensationalism to distract us from, oh, another sickening videotaped beheading. So naturally we, the people and the media goons we let spoon-feed us, would make a fuss out of the least outrageous of all recent developments: the cheap-shot mockery of a celebrity.

You tell me: Why in the world does anyone care how Eminem savagely or stupidly (depending on your view) spoofed permanently embattled Michael Jackson in his new "Just Lose It" video?

This is worth an uproar? Apparently so. Apart from drooling descriptions of the many Vote for Change Tour stops, plus two hopeful cancer reports - Charlie Watts licked his and Melissa Etheridge stands an excellent chance at staying off hers - this meaningless tidbit was surely the hottest entertainment news of last week. Probably the biggest talk of the month.

Well, that and the fact that Britney really is married this time. This week, anyway.

Go ahead and blame whatever Orwellian bogy man you imagine foists this stuff on us and remain ignorant of your fellow humans, but don't you ever get the feeling we're collectively pretty pathetic? I've seen "Street Smarts." I know we can't all pass college-entrance exams. Idiocy gets the news it deserves, I suppose.

But back to this puffed-up Eminem furor. First of all, Jacko needs to get a grip - at least on what he can, which wouldn't include his fortunes, reputation or Peter Pan syndrome. Look, you alien freak, talk-show hosts galore have long cracked harsher jokes about your, um, eccentricities than anything in this Em clip. They just don't have as many visual aids, that's all.

So Jacko got the video pulled off BET. Big deal - MTV's still gonna play it to death. So he denounced Slim Marshall Shady Mathers on Steve Harvey's show - as if that's gonna keep "The Encore," due Nov. 16, from selling faster than Sirius stock.

When will he ever learn to take ugly jabbing in stride and stop adding fuel to the fire?

And when will Eminem stop making the same video?

If you've seen the Jacko-lamponing bits, you've seen what you need to; the rest looks like all his other clips, with Em playing dress up, regurgitating stereotypes and making a jackass of himself.

What should bother people isn't that he decks himself out like Michael, loses his cosmetically mutilated nose (later irreparably trampled), then perches himself on a bed while young tots leap up and down behind him. What's more insulting is that Eminem reignites long-extinguished burning-hair gags. Does he think that can still get a laugh? Does his target demographic even know what that refers to?

I'll admit I haven't heard his new album yet - but I don't before it drops - but I sure hope his new rhymes aren't so stale. Sure hope this skewering of Jacko, the funniest thing from cutting-edge commentary, isn't a smoke-screen to keep us from noticing that he may not be the maverick he once seemed to be that Eminem, too, is no longer outrageous.

Then again, look how I just fell for his hype - pick on poor, pitiful Jacko, stir up some controversy and, whoops, there goes another column.

That leaves me little room to blather about things of value. Like Rhino Records' outstanding new four-disc box "Left of the Dial: Dispatches from the '80s Underground" (I'll get to it soon). Or the newly issued, extras-heavy, 5.1-enhanced DVD edition of the Rolling Stones' "Rock and Roll Circus," featuring a handful of slow-burning "Beggars Banquet" -era Stones classics; Lennon howling through "Yer Blues" with help from Clapton, Keith Richards and Mitch Mitchell; and a ripping take on "A Quick One While He's Away" by the Who, so mighty it led the Stones to shelve the project because they felt their stuff paled in comparison.

And it also leaves me no room to discuss fresher hip-hop titles that need no controversy to be great - notably Mos Def's "The New Danger" (from Geffen), which finally brings to light much of the volatile, metal-blasted Black Jack Johnson material he's been conjuring for more than a year; De La Soul's "The Grind Date" (Sanctuary), whose drawback is a propensity of ill-fitting sex raps; and, best of all, Toronto newcomer K-Os' wildly varied second album, "Joyful Rebellion" (on Astralwerks), which battles against the genre's ongoing stagnation by wrapping cliché-avoiding lyrics in pastiches of reggae, rock and classic R&B.

All of these deserve columns of their own (well, maybe not De La's latest), yet none of them has the clout to get noticed by anyone other than fringe-seekers, which amounts to a miniscule fraction compared with the number of people who could tell you their own version of the Eminem/Jacko debate. Such a sorry state of affairs.

Ask ASCII: Power Outage

By Logan Stack
staff writer

Dear ASCII:

When the power went out last weekend, I lost all the stuff I was working on. Did my computer get damaged in any way? How can I prevent losing all that stuff next time?

Perplexed

Dear Perplexed:

When the power goes out, usually there is no damage to the computer. If the power flickers and your computer is turning itself on and off rapidly, then damage may happen, also power surges can cause damage. You can prevent power surge damage by getting a surge protector. These often come with insurance so that if they fail, the company that made them will buy you a new computer.

To prevent data loss, you can set most programs (such as Word) to automatically save every minute or so. Then if the power goes off, you lose no more than one minute of work. In Word, go to Tools>Options, click on the "Save" tab, and make sure the "Save AutoRecover Information every: xx minutes" option is checked, and set the number of minutes to whatever you'd like. Saving the data takes the computer only about a second so there is really no reason not to save often. If you are like me and have a bunch of open web pages which you don't remember how to get to, you can use the Opera web browser, as it will save your open windows and reopen them all when next you start.

If you really want to make sure you don't lose anything, you can buy an Uninterruptible Power Supply.

A UPS is a battery which constantly charges when there is power and gives you a bit of time to save everything you're working on after the power goes off before its battery runs out. These are very heavy, and become increasingly hefty, expensive, and bulky as the battery time increases.

You can buy a UPS which provides a few seconds to save stuff for less than a hundred dollars (9 pizzas) with a unit which looks like a large power strip. For a few hundred dollars, you can buy an hour or so of battery time, with something the size of a loaf of bread. Companies that provide web hosting have UPS units which weigh hundreds of pounds and provide hours of power for multiple computers, giving them time to make sure the generators kick on so that web sites are never unavailable. That's a little bit of overkill for your desktop and would require an exhaust vent to run a diesel generator in your dorm room.

When the power went out over the weekend, my two roommates and I, all of us geeks, spent a while discussing how weird all considered buying a UPS but each had decided to spend the money elsewhere. I bought a larger hard disk, which (of course) was useless when the power went out.

More important to many users (especially the laptop users) than the power going out was the lack of Internet connection following the outage. While there was nothing you could do to reconnect to Penn State's network over the weekend, you can use a dial-up modem to regain a (slow) Internet connection. The freebie AOL disks you've been getting in the mail provide plenty of free hours if you just need a backup connection for when the network repair technicians aren't on call.

Have a story idea?
E-mail the *Beacon* at
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