

Pixies release new album

Surreal lyric trademark still evident in *Trompe Le Monde*

by Paul Plisiewicz
The Collegian

Pixies albums sound like the soundtrack to the bombing of Berlin overlaid with a narrative by Salvador Dali. *Trompe Le Monde* is no exception.

The searing guitars, pounding rhythms, nearly obscene melodies and surreal lyrics that have become the band's trademark come to fruition on their latest effort.

The opener, the title track, throws the listener into the middle of a bizarre world where we are immediately asked, "Why de cupids and angels / continually haunt her dreams / like memories of another life?" I don't know.

Frontman Black Francis doesn't answer questions, he merely asks them and leaves the wondering to us. Watch yourself here though; Francis himself says he is not to be taken seriously. He enjoys teasing his audience with tiny morsels of thought and then running away to play a different game.

Some songs on the album do seem to carry a more serious tone, however. In "Planet Of Sound," Francis recounts his own trials as a struggling new artist fighting to make a name for himself.

He takes the notion one step further in "Alec Eiffel," where blame is placed in the hands of the world.

"He thought big and they called it a phallic / they didn't know he was panoramic /

sometimes people can be oh so dense," he sings.

Kim Deal's driving bass and the swirling guitars scream with anger and determination, and the band sounds tighter than ever.

Francis' maniacal hollering that became monotonous on previous albums is all but eliminated on this record. Only "The Sad Punk" features his deafening wails and even then they seem overpowered by the force of the band.

Trompe Le Monde provides the Pixies' best vocal performance since 1988's *Surfer Rosa*. Kim Deal doesn't see much action on lead vocals, but Francis mixes up his delivery enough to provide variety.

The album peaks with two of the Pixies' best tracks ever.

In half the running time as the original, they crunch through the Jesus and Mary Chains' "Head On," proving once again that they can do more in two minutes than the army can do in an entire day.

It sounds like an original, even though the lyrics are completely sensible. They burn through the verses as if they're afraid someone will notice them doing a cover, and leave you thinking "Hey, wasn't that...?"

"U-Mass" is probably the raunchiest, most gut-wrenching song Francis has written to date. With the punchiest guitar riff on this side of the Clash-line and lyrics like a steel-toed boot in the face of higher education, the song is bound to wear out a few rewind

buttons. It's pure Pixie power, with bite.

The rest of the album demonstrates the band's finesse and also its ability to baffle listeners through absurd lyrics.

"Bird Dream of the Olympus Mons" comes as close to a ballad as Francis can get; it also sounds more like Jesus and Mary Chain than the aforementioned cover. Ironically, "Bird Dream's" lyrics are manageable. I think the more bizarre the title, the less bizarre the song.

Two low-points on the album are "Palace of the Brine" and "Space (I Believe In)." "Palace" is the catchiest tune and also the most lifeless on the record. It's neutral.

Whereas, "Space" is so absurd it becomes irritating: "Jeffery with one f, jeffery / Now I'm going to sing the perry mason theme."

After hearing this track you want to go back and listen to "U-Mass" again.

One thing I haven't seen from the album is the first single. There are no "Dig For Fire's" or "Here Comes Your Man's" on *Trompe Le Monde*, but a few odd b-sides could be released.

With their strange ideas and often-times thrashing instrumentation, the Pixies aren't for everybody. But, then again, that new Carpenter's box set is sixty bucks.

God Fodder grabs you

by Brad Kane
The Collegian

Doesn't it seem like a lot of music today "grows on you?" It never seems like anything grabs you by certain unmentionable areas the first time you listen to it and pulls you into that state of musical ecstasy, does it? (Maybe it's just me, I don't know).

Well, here's some news. If you want to remember what it's like to be wrapped in an attention getting headlock by music again (ok, maybe not that badly), then it's time to check out the debut album from Ned's Atomic Dustbin, *God Fodder*.

Featuring a simple, powerful, straightforward chord structure and lyrics reminiscent of punk music, Ned's Atomic Dustbin has crafted a gem of an album through simplicity. In the process, the group has tapped into the same vein that worked for punk rock in the late 70's.

True, this style tends to make many of the songs on *God Fodder* sound the same, but if the formula works, don't question it. Hey, at least the band utilizes two basses instead of a more traditional two guitars.

Now there's a bit of diversity for all you naysayers of musical complacency. Even in music that seems similar, there are slightly different nuances to be found.

But if you can't get over the fact that most of the tracks on *God Fodder* are so much alike, the lyrics here are surprisingly well written for a debut album.

Dealing more often than not with finding integrity and personal worth through love, and loss of the same, tracks such as "Less Than Useful," "Selfish" and "Happy" stand out.

"Less Than Useful" is the most impressive, dealing with being dumped but trying to find ways to smile through the anger and sadness. Yes, it may sound slightly juvenile or even time worn, but let's remember that we're dealing with a cliché prone, young band here.

There are, of course, in good punk trash fashion, some songs that don't seem to make a lot of sense on the surface. Tracks such as "Kill Your Television" and "Grey Cell Green" qualify for that honor on *God Fodder*.

The latter is an especially powerful track, at least musically. Released as the second single ("Happy" was the first), the lyrics may not be easy to discern, but the overpowering attack of the music is good enough to merit positive mention.

Like all good, classic punk albums, on *God Fodder* there's more than enough fury to go around. This makes for quite a listening experience, but the style could wear thin in the future.

Here's to hoping that this doesn't happen to Ned's. With a little diversity (remember how The Clash brought reggae into their music without sacrificing emotion?) in future albums, Ned's Atomic Dustbin could revive punk -- 90's style.



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