



Fractal Pattern

Absent From But Entirely Within The Landscape
2006 FP Records
www.fractalpattern.com

LISA OSTROWSKI
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Fractal Pattern's second album, *Absent From But Entirely Within The Landscape*, sticks to the Edmonton-based outfit's punk-rock style, but not sickeningly so. They manage to deviate from their classic sound in a way that makes this album appeal to everyone from artsy, indie-rockers to the politically charged. The moaning French horn heard is serene and haunting while the guitars and drums bring a more aggressive sound to the record, making *Absent* a well-rounded collection of enchanting melodies.

Although the album is almost entirely instrumental, the band includes readings from Garrett Hardin's *The Tragedy of the Commons* on several of the tracks. This addition gives listeners the impression that Fractal Pattern isn't

only a musically gifted group, but a globally aware one as well. According to the band's website, *Absent* was even printed using biodegradable, soy-based inks on recycled paper. Indeed, this record is better than many that have come from bands concerned with saving the world and fighting the commerciality of North American society, simply because the band is able to bring their views into the record in an educated way without pushing them upon the listener.

Fractal Pattern doesn't take any shortcuts with *Absent*. The carefully mastered chord and tempo changes flow almost flawlessly, and can easily be appreciated by anyone with an understanding of music, global issues or art in general.



New York Dolls

One Day It Will Please Us To Remember Even This
Roadrunner Records
www.nydolls.org

GWYNETH DUNSFORD
Arts & Entertainment Writer

last studio album, *The New York Dolls* are back with something to prove. Credited as the principle inspiration of The Ramones and Blondie, The New York Dolls separated in 1977, but their latest album, *One Day It Will Please Us To Remember Even This*, is the only true indicator of whether, despite their scourges of addiction, the remaining two members can uphold the band's status.

The fourteen tracks of *One Day* are true to form with gratuitous guitar solos and humorously simplistic lyrics. However, The New York Dolls' current sound is more Bachman Turner Overdrive than "Hey ho, let's go," like on "We're All in Love" where there's much articulation by wonky harmonica riffs and stumbling keyboard strokes.

Unfortunately, though, for The New York Dolls' contemporary admirers, the artists' former do-it-yourself idealism has been left weeping on the wayside of this polished, commercial album. Likewise, the collaborative input provided by Michael Stipe and Iggy Pop is an ineffective attempt to alleviate the heavy monotony of the album. In an equally underhanded ploy, the record label has included a feebly packaged "Making of the CD" DVD to appeal to the current MTV generation.

Overall, this disc can't be wholly condemned. It can, however, be ignored; as it's neither innovatively awe-inspiring nor comfortingly familiar, The New York Dolls' music offers nothing of significance to its listeners.



TV On The Radio

Return To Cookie Mountain
Touch & Go Records
www.tvontheradio.com

RYAN HEISE
Arts & Entertainment Writer

More things in this world need to be categorized by whether or not David Bowie likes them. I mean, he's Bowie, for God's sake! Have you seen *Labyrinth*? That movie was awesome!

So, when he personally backs TV On The Radio, a New York-based experimental band, the contents of that shiny piece of plastic have to be great.

Return To Cookie Mountain, the band's awkwardly named latest release, isn't for the musically faint of heart. It's an adventurous look at what music can be, not what the mainstream thinks it should be. The loop-filled opening track, "I Was A Lover," stutters away with skipping beats and trippy synths that eventually give way to the

beautiful and melodic "Province," featuring backing vocals by Bowie himself. In fact, every song on the album seems to deviate from the previous. Whether it's driven by powerful vocals, dance-worthy drums or simple hand-claps, the songs seem to stand on their own as legitimate pieces of art.

Return To Cookie Mountain is a pretty amazing listen from start to finish. It's the type of album that makes you wonder why you listen to some of the crap that you do when there are artists like TV On The Radio doing their own thing and having it turn out fantastic. It also makes you wonder if not listening to it will make Bowie think you're a loser. The answer is yes.



Swollen Members

Black Magic
Battleaxe Records
www.swollenmembers.com

SHAUN MCMULLEN
Arts & Entertainment Writer

It's clichéd to say that sometimes in a band's lifetime comes the "dark night of the soul," where the members have to take the time to come to grips with success or failure, and find out if it's really all worth it. Too often it seems that this is a cynical PR move, fodder for a "Behind the Music" documentary, but occasionally, it results in what counts: great music. Take the new *Swollen Members* CD, for example.

Now, the Members have always had a penchant for the gothic, and on *Black Magic*, they paint an even darker picture than they have before. But it's not the mythological demons that they're battling: the problems

they confess to are all too real, be it mental health ("Darkclouds"), artistic burnout ("Heart") or the trials of keeping it all together ("Brothers"). It's not all darkness and gloom, since there's a streak of we'll-make-it-through optimism that runs throughout. Heck, they even managed to get Ghostface Killah to contribute.

Though it won't completely alienate the post-*Monsters in the Closet* crowd, *Black Magic* doesn't exactly qualify as bubblegum rap either; it's a strong effort that proves the crew isn't finished yet. Instead, they come back with their feet firmly on the ground and those demons in check. Reason for optimism, indeed.

Look at Hagrid.

He thinks he's William Wallace.



Unfortunately, though, he's not—but by writing for *Gateway A&E* (meetings on Thursdays at 5pm in Room 3-04, SUB), he's re-enacting *Braveheart* by freeing himself and his fellow countrymen from hoards of laconic cretins.

Mel Gibson would be proud.

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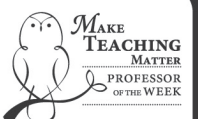
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JACKSON HINTON

PUT YOUR HANDS UP IN THE AIR Cuff The Duke and the Hylozoists got the crowds rough and rowdy on Saturday.