

# Geldof writes meaty songs for 'Vegetarians of Love'

By ROB NEWBERRY

The 1986 release of *Deep In the Heart of Nowhere* did just enough to disappoint and silence the masses who thought the genius behind Live Aid was some kind of new messiah. But now Bob Geldof is back with *The Vegetarians of Love*, and this time, his message is strong enough to convert some people.

Since Live Aid, Geldof has been trying to keep expectations low, shying away from the "Saint Bob" label. The title of this new work is part of the scheme: *The Vegetarians of Love*—think love with no meat. What's ironic is that there is so much to chew on in these tunes, the title doesn't fit.

Geldof's style for the new album is rooted in the folk-rock of Bob Dylan and Van Morrison. In fact, Geldof's voice is so dry that it's easy to mistake him for Dylan, except that he keeps pitch better.

The music to back him draws on Irish folk and Cajun bayou melodies. No experimental sounds or synthesizers; this record comes complete with penny whistles, ukeleles and accordians, not to mention the standard acoustic guitars.

The album was recorded in five days, so the songs have a spontaneous, live feel, and the instruments are mixed loud enough to hear everything. Geldof manages to keep his vocals just above the accompaniment, melting his monologue with the folksy sound.

But it is definitely not the music that makes this album stand out. Geldof has more intelligence than is acceptable for most music listeners, and his truths jump out of every crevice. He's not preachy, but he's definitely right.

To shake some more expectations off his shoulder, Geldof skips through the Irish barroom sound of "The Great Song of Indifference." Humorously separating himself from the Live Aid altruism, he reminds us, "I don't care if the Third World fries, it's hotter there than I don't care at all."

Then in "Big Romantic Stuff" Geldof takes another cynical look at love-dove relationships from the standpoint of a disappointed veteran. "Did they ever say it's tough, you never get to give up on the big romantic stuff?"

Geldof chimes in against stale belief in tradition in "The Chains of Pain" and still brings out the hurt of ex-lovers in the blues number that opens the album, "A Gospel Song." In "No Small Wonder," he simply relates his feelings at the immense adventure of life, even though things around him look drab.

The record closes with another piece of Geldof's cynical humor, "The End of the World." He starts off, "Though it strikes you as seeming a little absurd, I'm here to announce the

end of the world"; then he finishes his warning, "No, tradamus and Jesus and Buddha and me. We said it was coming. Now just wait and see."

With *Deep in the Heart*, Geldof shattered a lot of expectations and most of the critics wrote him off. Now that the pressure's off, Geldof presents *The Vegetarians of Love*, and shows them that all he has to live up to is himself.

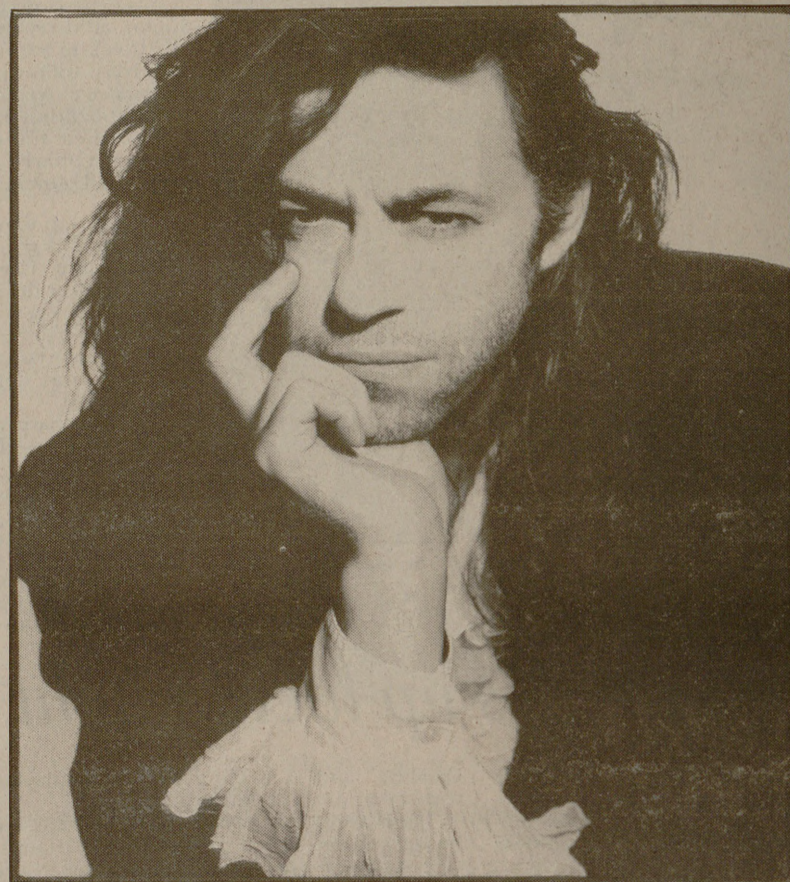
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Bob Geldof



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R.J. Herrera, Rocky George, Mike Muir, Bob Heathcote and Mike Clark make up Suicidal Tendencies.

## Lights...camera...suicide

# New release spiels horrific view of humanity with poignant lyrics

By JOHN RIGHTER

It's a suicidal thang...you don't want to understand.

"Suicide's An Alternative." "Institutionalized." *How Will I Laugh Tomorrow When I Can't Even Smile Today*. *Controlled By Hatred/Feel Like Shit...Deja Vu*. Misted or not, Suicidal Tendencies is known for its horrific, bearish view of humanity.

*Lights...Camera...Revolution* is no exception. The group's fifth release, *Lights* spiels forth vocalist Mike Muir's ministry of the suicidally-skewed view. As Muir screams during the opening "You Can't Bring Me Down," "This ain't no Mister Rogers' Neighborhood!"

No, Mike, this isn't Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. In fact, I smiled more while watching "Platoon" than I did listening to *Lights*. Fortunately, *Lights* is the strongest album Suicidal Tendencies has released since their classic debut. So I can handle the dearth of cynicism and personal nihilism.

*Lights* is a sawed-off, passionate collection of mega-heavy riffs and slicing lyrics studioized to

maximize the band's trip into creative gadgetry. Muir, once a raspy screamer of youthful angst (suicide, depression and a kid's right to a Pepsi...just a Pepsi) is now a metalloid in command of the hollow, metal twang necessary for Suicidal's scorching vocal watage.

While not a happy trip, *Lights* is an infectious one that plugs into Muir's poignancy, embellished by screams, chugs, news calls and satirical intros.

The aforementioned "You Can't Bring Me Down" is a speed burner fueled in the anarchic tradition of "Institutionalized" that starts *Lights* off with a head kick. The grungish "Lost Again" is equally intense, dealing with what else... suicide.

With the tongue-in-cheek "Lovely," Muir alleviates the tension (though not the direction), stoking jabs at today's attitude of laissez-faire and Social Darwinism.

"Screwed up people everywhere, but I ain't got time to care," Muir panders. "I feel lovely, la la lovely. All kind of souls down to the curb, but me help? Don't be absurd. I feel

lovely, la la lovely. Cause it's not a problem of society if it don't affect me and I feel lovely.

"I think I'll throw a party... it's a surprise party for me."

The brutal "Go'n Breakdown" ("Went to school at U. of hell, favorite course was kill and tell") and "Emotion No. 13" (death) keeps the stuff tense, while the beautiful "Alone," a balladesque homage to self-belief and courage adds a much, much needed shot of healthy optimism.

Muir, the only original member of the group, has kept his vision focused on attracting attention to the world he lives in. To Muir, the reason the average person can't relate to his pain and anger is because the average person blocks out the real world. What is not acknowledged does not exist.

Before you cry fiction, realize that Suicidal Tendencies was one of the top independent-label sellers for several years, and is even bigger with major-label Epic. Whether that is call for alarm or thanks, I'll leave to you. But what is positive is that Muir does stand alone.

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