

This Mortal Coil offers ethereal, dark music

By Kevin Robinson
The Battalion

Mention British indie label 4AD to any import music buff and a dominant mental image immediately appears in their heads. For the past ten years, 4AD records has diligently cultivated a loyal cult following by sticking to a tried and true formula.

Music Review

Pull together lush, ethereal orchestrations, a soothing female vocal used as an instrument in itself, package all this in the dark, but hauntingly beautiful photography and artwork of Vaughan Oliver, and add the the relatively limited availability of 4AD releases (almost all are available only as British imports) and the formula for underground success is made.

Exceptions to these rules, such as Boston band the Pixies and Ultra Vivid Scene are rare. However, there is still room for artistic growth and development, as the new release from This Mortal Coil shows.

Blood is the latest from This Mortal Coil, till now more a label project than a real band. The first album, *It'll End In Tears* was more or less a collaboration between members of the Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance, Wolfgang Press, and others.

Although an interesting concept, the various members brought little of the feeling and spark of their own work to the project. As a result, the album turned out to be little more than a dull mess.

On the second album, *Filigree and Shadow*, project producers Ivo Watts-Russell and John Fryer brought in vocalists Louise and

Deidre Rutkowski to do most of the singing on the album. Although the actual music was still mostly a collective hodgepodge, the project was gaining unity in its direction and quality increased dramatically over the previous effort.

With *Blood*, Watts-Russell and Fryer take the next step in the progression. They themselves take on the writing duties for half of the album's twenty-one songs. Deidre and Louise Rutkowski are joined by the folksy vocals of Caroline Crawley. The result is the definite best of the three albums and possibly the best 4AD release in quite a while.

Blood, takes This Mortal Coil into a previously unexplored guitar oriented sound. Sure, the funeral orchestrations are still here and such tracks as "Help Me Lift You Up" still dabble in new-age synth soundscapes. But the overall tone of the group this time is more upbeat, using their usual cello and violin and synth to approximate more conventional pop melodies.

Stand out tracks are abundant on the album. "Mr. Somewhere" sounds like it should have been written by Suzanne Vega and uses an acoustic guitar and cello to get a folksy, barroom effect.

Kim Deal of the Pixies and Tanya Donnelly of Throwing Muses do guest vocals on "You and Your Sister", a track much better than anything on the two's previous collaboration, the disappointing *Breeders* album.

On "I Come and Stand at Every Door", Louise Rutkowski uses an intensely powerful vocal style that had me checking the liner notes to make sure Sinead O'Connor wasn't doing a guest appearance. She wasn't, but the song is very reminiscent of *The Lion and the Cobra* era Sinead.

And, "I am the Cosmos", the album's one real rock song, contains both a driving electric guitar

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Music Advance



Trout Fishing In America

Live Music

Trout Fishing, Root 1 to perform at AnNam

Ezra Idlet and Keith Grimwood of Trout Fishing in America will perform at AnNam Tea House's 'Labor Day Weekend Festival.' The two-man band is popular for its acoustic rock intertwined with comedy. T. F. I. A. will play Friday at 9 p.m. Cover is \$6.

Kicking off the 'Labor Day Fest' is progressive rock bands S.T.-37 and Hope on Thursday night at 9 p.m. \$3 cover.

On Saturday, the reggae and world beat

sounds of Root 1 will pulsate from the Tea House. The former members of the Killer Bees will play at 9 p.m. Cover is \$4.

Plan a new look at the Tea House, which is currently closed for remodeling. Lunch and dinner will resume on Tuesday, September 3.

Also on Tuesday the Tea House will host a 'Welcome Back to School Party.' Four local bands will perform, starting at 9 p.m. Cover is \$1.

For more information, call 846-2898.

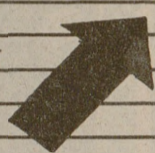
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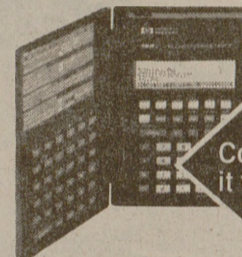
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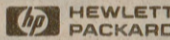


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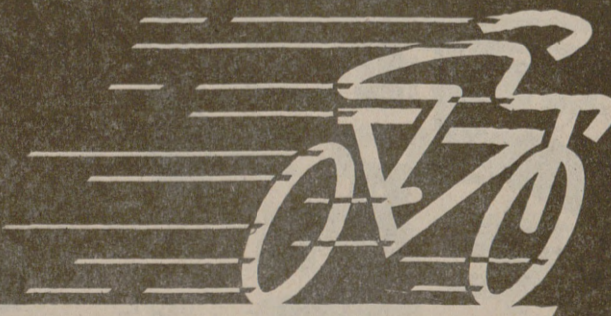
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