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THE BATTALION

Thursday, September 25, 2003



Music Review V 2.002

Blur

"Think Tank"

EMI Records/UK

Finally, there is an album out there that creates a listening experience similar to that of downing a spicy mixed drink, minus the nasty hangover. After nearly four years of waiting, Blur fans have been treated to the band's latest cisc, "Think Tank," which combines high profile producers, experimental instruments, lineup changes and smooth vocals, which in the past, would have been considered uncharacteristic of the band.

The album was recorded in Morocco amid band scuffles and rumors of breakups. Despite the problems surrounding its recording, "Think Tank" consists entirely of a variety of songs, but each follows a common edgy style.

For a bunch of white boys having a sojourn in the east, Blur has crafted an exquisite album that has tracks even more exotic than many Shakira efforts.

With the sudden departure of guitarist and founding member Graham Coxon, lead vocalist Damon Albarn takes on the strumming duties, and the results are resoundingly amazing.

The album opens up with the slow but irresistible track "Ambulance" which has a musical lineup consisting of electronically produced noises, the saxophone and even a chorus of background "ooohhs."

Right after is the song "Out of Time" which uses an elaborate Moroccan orchestra to augment Albam's soothing vocals and poignant lyrics. Most of the tunes on the album follow the slower, more mellow precedent set by songs such as "Battery in your Leg" and "Canvas."

For Blur fans who relish their thoughtless and fun songs, the tracks "Moroccan Peoples Revolutionary Bowls Club" and "Brothers and Sisters" follow in the mold of past hits such as "On your Own" and "Song 2."

The song "We've Got a File on you" is a 48-second piece that only repeats the title a few times as a substitute for lyrics. Despite its short time span, the song is explosive, catchy and a notable treat.

The album features guest producers William Orbit and Norman Cook, aka Fatboy Slim.

Slim-produced tracks include the upbeat song "Gene by Gene" and the only song on the album that made it to American mainstream radio, "Crazy Beat." The latter ends up sounding like leftovers from their "Leisure" era gone bad.

Orbit's effort "Sweet Song" deserves mention. The sincere quality of the song and the minimal use of music sets it apart from all previous moody Blur songs.

On "Think Tank," Blur nearly achieves what most bands set out to do throughout their careers and fail-- create a genre of their own. Their latest

compilation is unparalleled in its creativity and successful experimentation, and will be highly regarded by anyone who hears it

regarded by anyone who hears it.

Keep your bags packed after hearing it though, because side effects include developing an overwhelming desire to move to England.

-- Nishat Fatima



Music Review V 2.002

Big Bad Voodoo Daddies
"Save my Soul"
Vanguard Records

This CD might as well have been called "I'll bring the party, because I live fast, loud and happy." Big Bad Voodoo Daddy has put out another quality CD filled with swinging beats and catchy tunes.

A tuba starts off the opening song "Zig Zaggity Woop Woop Part One" and immediately transports the listener to the streets of New Orleans with the traditional instrumentation of a bar band. The rest of the CD sticks mostly to the recent wave of insanely fast "new swing" songs that infectiously make your feet tap and your fingers snap.

While most of the the album doesn't stray far from the usual Big Bad Voodoo Daddy style, "Don't You Feel My Leg," is a surprisingly subtle and different track. Other notable songs on this CD include "Simple Songs," "Save My Soul" and "Like It"

Though this is a good album with great songs, "Save My Soul" will probably not be a huge success since the Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's style is not very radio friendly. This CD is well produced and recorded. After squeezing so much energy and passion into each CD, it's a wonder that the members of the band don't pop out of the speakers.

-- Daniel Chapman



Toss it out with your Spice Girls CD!

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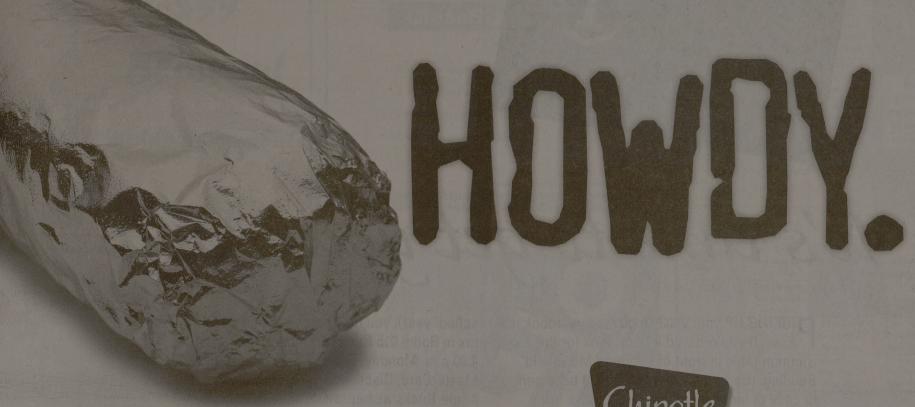
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