

Mp3 Ben Ratliff - Songs For The New Depression



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Lo-fi gutbucket roots music mixed with electronica using found keyboards, megaphones, guitar and loops. 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Roots Rock, BLUES: Electric Blues Details: CD: "Songs for the New Depression" Ben Ratliff flexes his experimental muscles on this growling, inventive new solo effort. "All Night," the first track, sounds like Howlin' Wolf with a beat box, and if that debt weren't clear enough, "Let It Out" features what sounds like an actual wolf cry. To some degree the whole album feels like a resourceful bastard child of the Wolf and Link Wray, even in the songs that rely on analog synth sounds or hip-hop beats, such as "Leviathan" and the abstract instrumental "Good Morning." There's a good deal more to this music than its solid blues foundation. Highly musical synth work, fuzzed-out guitars and sinister vocal effects evoke a whole gamut of experimental rock, from Chrome and the Residents to Beck and Laurie Anderson. But Ratliff's most original contribution is his fusion of grinding industrial beats with deeply felt, smoky blues guitar. Moodwise, he can almost out-grim Townes Van Zandt or Jim Morrison ("My Days" even talks about a "lost highway," while "Drive All Night" evokes "Riders on the Storm"), but the clanging beats strike the perfect tempos to keep the listener grooving through it all. This appropriately titled CD might be too out-there to sing along with, but it's a churning head-bopper nonetheless. -- Jon Sobel, Kozmicblues.net

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