

Mp3 Menomena - I Am The Fun Blame Monster!



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"Oh l'amour... Broke my heart now I'm aching for you." 9 MP3 Songs ROCK: Punk, POP: Piano Details: the portland mercury: sound glue menomena is rockin' the remix by julianne shepherd ----- at first, it's tough to figure out the way menomena's piano, guitar, drums, and bass converge in on each other like electrical patchwork. their sounds fit together, snug but sparse, fleshing out into reflective pop and instrumental music that is both strangely skeletal and panoramic. their stellar bass and beats pop out in grooves with a vague hiphop influence, embellished with the thoughtful temperance of piano and vocal melodies. even still, something about their composition always seems a little unseated, as if their songs are being played backwards. live, it sounds like they're playing remix versions of their songs. menomena always seemed excellent to me--polished, but not glossy, and very heartfelt--but i could never figure out why they sounded so... electronic. as it turns out, that's just how the portlanders--brent knopf, danny seim, and justin harris--write their music. but also, there's another reason for the remix-y sound. knopf is some kind of programming genius, and he wrote this special computer recording program called dealer (short for "digital looping recorder"), specifically for the composition of menomena's music. "it's a loop-based program that facilitates improvisational recording," brent explains somewhat cryptically. okay, let's all put on our geek-out freak-out glasses now. essentially, dealer allows menomena to make spontaneous recordings, and it's different from other computer recording programs in that the looping process is far simpler. menomena can record different parts, loop, and layer them as they see fit--this is how they compose their music. they record the parts on the computer, cut and paste until they've made a song they like, and then learn the song from the final version. brent says, "we're basically a cover band of our own songs. danny will mix down the sounds and then we'll learn the song the way he mixed it down. we'll have no premeditated structure to a song before that." "we're composers, but without the 'c-o-m,'" jokes justin.

though this method of songwriting may seem foreign to some rock musicians, danny points out that no emotion is lost just because they're writing on a computer. "hiphop music is mostly a series of loops more or less, and that seems pretty obviously emotional to me, and this is the same kind of thing--loop-based. it is a lot harder to portray energy in five-second loops than it is building huge crescendos and kicking in the pedal at the climactic moment." true, and menomena has nothing to worry about when it comes to energy and emotion. knopf's expressive vocals can carry that burden--at times, his voice stretches out craggily and downtrodden; at others, he's a voice suited for pop music and musicals voice, projecting clearly and sonorously. but danny's kickass, solid, hiphop-influenced beats and justin's strolling basslines add much depth and groove, turning pop songs for smarty-pantses into bona fide contemplative ass-shakers. pretty fresh, non?

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