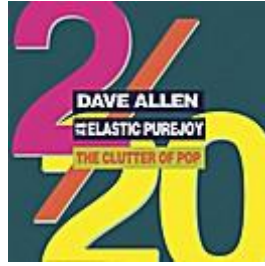


Mp3 Dave Allen And The Elastic Purejoy - The Clutter Of Pop



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Uncluttered Rock for now people. This album attempts to dissect the Clutter that is Rock music. Inspiration for this weird and wonderful record came from many sources not least Brian Eno and his pack of cards known as Oblique Strategies. Plus Sebadoh +PJ 13 MP3 Songs ROCK: Punk, ROCK: Modern Rock Details: Just so you know - this is a limited edition cd. After this pressing has sold out I will be only selling digital files of the songs - Dave. REVIEW: Dave Allen and the Elastic Purejoy: The Clutter of Pop There was a series of TV commercials a year or two ago that revolved around Michael Jordan and Larry Bird playing an unusually complicated game of horse, and refusing to let a persistent Charles Barkley join them. The commercials are glimpses of an alternate universe in which success and fame are contained phenomena, where the lives of famous people, outside of the medium in which we know them, are basically like ours when we aren't being their audience, just somewhere else. There's a spare high school gym there where Michael Jordan just whiles away his spare afternoons shooting baskets, where Larry Bird might stroll in with his lunch in hand. When Michael Jordan's ordinary suburban doorbell rings, Jordan himself opens the door to see who's there, and neither he nor Charles regard Charles' beseeching presence, on his doorstep, as unusual. The spots suggest that people who share an apparent community in our experience of them also share a real community, and this is a pleasing fiction. Now, one has to go at the word "fame" with a large pair of blacksmith's tongs and a great deal of pent-up animosity in order to mangle it into any shape that could vaguely apply to a music reviewer, and even on the constrained scale of music reviewers, I barely qualify as obscure (it's possible that I am responsible for adding more words about music to the Web on a weekly basis than any other single individual, but all it would take is somebody who could afford one more monkey and one more typewriter, and I'd lose even that

distinction). Still, you've heard of me, even those of you who aren't relatives, and so I am, in some sense, a part of the illusory community of music reviewers. If people fantasized about music reviewers the way they do about basketball players, then our version of those commercials would probably have a whole clamor of us going to the record store together, bickering in the aisles about whose last album sucked more convincingly, and trading pompous self-serving metaphors while cuffing stray members of the actual music-buying public in the head for emphasis. Our writing, though, if we did it right, would represent the public record of our collective ongoing conversation about, and explorations in, music. But if there's such a thing going on, nobody has invited me. My personal experience of the virtual community of music reviewers amounts to Canadian critic Roch Parisien and I exchanging emails in which we ridicule the other's grammatical errors, shudder at lapses in judgment and taste, offer largely unsupported suppositions about what new records the other one might enjoy, and occasionally even reluctantly admit that the other one was right about something. It's not exactly the Algonquin or anything, but we've each badgered the other into some new discoveries our lives would be poorer without. Dave Allen is one of my recent favorites in this category. Roch's review sounded intriguing, and *The Clutter of Pop* is the sort of enigmatic title that I am defenseless against, so despite Roch having unnerved me in recent weeks by liking both the new Cracker and Rancid albums, I decided this one was worth risking. Dave Allen's history, in case his name means nothing to you, as it did to me, goes approximately as follows: bassist in Gang of Four for their first two albums, Shriekback with Barry Andrews from XTC for four albums, King Swamp with Shriekback drummer Martyn Barker for a couple albums, Low Pop Suicide with Rick Boston for their first, the reunited Shriekback for their seventh album, and one prior Elastic Purejoy album credited just to the Elastic Purejoy. Somewhere in there he also started World Domination records, which is home to several of these incarnations. So now do you feel as stupid about not knowing his name as I did? To put musical styles to those names, Gang of Four's rhythm section was an angular and austere foundation for perhaps the original evocation of overthought post-punk (of which "Anthrax" is probably the one example if you've heard only one; the more accessible "I Love a Man in Uniform" came later), Shriekback was a cacophonous dance band (Oil and Gold's surging anthem "Nemesis", with the immortal lines "Big black nemesis, / Parthenogenesis, / No one move a muscle / As the dead come home", would be the most obvious reference), King Swamp I've never heard, Low Pop Suicide play extremely loud guitar rock (and continue to, without Allen), and the first Elastic Purejoy album is a dense thicket of

writhing guitar tentacles. Its title notwithstanding, *The Clutter of Pop* is actually a much simpler and more straightforward album than almost any of the above. Cracker, as much as I dislike them, are not a bad comparison point. Both bands' musical core is bass, firm but not showy drumming, raw guitar and an uncomplicated voice, wrapped unfussily around solid, if standard, compositional skeletons. Allen and Lowery have similarly nasal vocal timbres, and Allen's slightly-Devoto-esque English accent produces some of the same effect as Lowery's perpetual sneer. And both Lowery and Allen seem to be angry about various things. The similarities run out quickly when you get past this basic level, though. For me, that is, Cracker never does get much further. Their songs brandish predictable structures and chord changes as if they were inherently virtuous, and Lowery's underachiever lyrics make me cringe and glower simultaneously, which is how I found out that it is medically possible to sprain your forehead. Allen, on the other hand, uses the central chord changes as a scaffolding on which to drape buzzing keyboards, misfiring hand-claps, staticky radio samples, acoustic guitars, banjo, violin, jangly piano, synth accordion and a host of happily erratic background vocalists. Cracker albums sound like they were made in a garage, and this one does, too, but where Cracker sounds to me like some half-stoned burnouts standing in oil spots in their torn Converse high-tops, breathing a little too much lingering exhaust, *The Clutter of Pop* sounds like it comes from a garage that has been given over permanently to an ongoing friends-and-neighbors project of model-railroad-like complexity, nerdishness and constant incompleteness. One gets the feeling that liberal use was made of duct tape during the album's construction, and that not a lot of time was wasted on optimizing signal paths and color-coding patch cables, and I suspect that the phrase "Hey, let's wire that in somewhere and see what it sounds like" was spoken more than once during the recording. Neither the production nor the eclecticism obscure the appeal of the music, though, and the overall effects, for me, are a charming improvisational vitality and a pervasive unpretentious good humor, something like the Penguin Cafe Orchestra's best friends' bar band playing a late-night jam in a barn they've just raised. And lyrically, there's no comparison. Gang of Four's political agenda could fill a book (namely *Ranters and Crowd Pleasers*, by Greil Marcus), and while Allen wasn't their lyricist, it's clear that he paid attention. "A Life in the Priesthood?" is an oblique attack on rock critics (or a denunciation of certain fishing practices, I'm not totally sure which). I like the aphorism "Our thoughts can change direction / 'Cause our heads are round." The title track is a searing and frantic vote of no-confidence in all of modern music ("How can we all stand by and let nothing move a generation?"),

"Talk Radio" is an even more vitriolic excoriation of the American airwaves' other chief product ("When do you find time to breathe / With that idiot wind whistling / Through the gaps between your teeth?" "With all the crap you're spouting / It's a wonder you can eat."), and "The Last of England" balances the national distribution of venom with the weary line "If it were on fire / I wouldn't piss on it". The booklet (labeled "Read", lest you misunderstand its use) attempts valiantly to resurrect the lost art of liner notes, with both a critical introduction by Fred Mills, and a long autobiographical explanation from Allen. I do, however, strongly recommend that you stop this disc after track eight. The first eight songs comprise a kind of short record (a little under half an hour), but not every album has to be 72:57, just because a CD can hold that much. Stop the disc, take a breath, and let that be The Clutter of Pop to you. Once you've done that, and you're ready to listen to something else, you're certainly welcome to decide that the rest of the disc is that something else, but I suspect that your experience of the music both before that point and after it will be much more sensible if you think of the halves separately. A bizarre stylistic shift suddenly occurs at track nine, introduced by the long, sinister and heavily mechanized song "That Disgust Will Allow", which leads to a proudly-billed minute of silence, and then three long and rather repetitive untitled instrumentals. This second set might serve as good soundtrack mood music, particularly for those parts of movies where some time-consuming and not very visual narrative stretch from the book is compressed into a montage of indicative highlights, but in the context of the organic pop songs that open the album, these grimly static later pieces seem foreign and, to me, unwelcome. Copyright 1996, glenn mcdonald

Encouragement, carping to: twasfeedback@furia.com furia The Clutter of Pop: Lyrics for a song with no music! The song never made it on the album obviously but here's the lyrics anyway: false reverence reverberates in nostalgia's dried up well if you have nothing left to say at least try and say it well - well now there's no turning back we've already covered that nostalgia's heavy blanket has smothered the attack and when music's all a shambles our hopes dashed on the Rock if there's nowhere left to turn do we just play until we drop? if no one's heart is breaking there's nothing left to yearn and if pop taught us a lesson surely it was to kick up a storm but like Bob's Jack o'Hearts it appears to be lying face down it's time to pick up all the trash and run it out of town so suffer little children the streets are lined with clowns with pen in hand they lick the boots of those who kick us when we're down there can be no rejoicing until we've won the right to drown in the flood of music on the wire seeping up from underground mediocrity is standing all the standards we decry and look who rules the airwaves and no one questions why when it's

the singer not the song how can we all stand by and let nothing move a generation until someone has to die... copyright Dave Allen 1995 2001 More words and rants can be found here - pampelmoose.com

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