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SOUND OFF



JAR OF FLIES

★★

GROUP: Alice in Chains
LABEL: Columbia

Break out the bowls and call up your favorite pot dealers. Alice in Chains fans — the new EP, *Jar of Flies*, is mellow smokin' music.

Jar of Flies picks up where 1992's *Sap*, the band's first EP, left off. Except *Jar of Flies* isn't as melodic or catchy ... actually, it just isn't that good.

It isn't good because it doesn't sound like Alice in Chains.

People first heard of Alice in Chains (albeit, loudly) with "Man in the Box," a crunchy tune that will probably be found in later editions of *Freedom Rock*, or whatever passes for that in about a decade.

The group made its name and stamped its label as the second-heaviest band in Seattle (go, Soundgarden, go!) with that album, Alice in Chains' first, *Facelift* (1990), and didn't let up with *Dirt* (1992).

Two songs on the recent *Last Action Hero Soundtrack* continued that sound, typified by songs that would make the listener afraid to answer the door or walk on the street at night.

Several music magazines honored this *Dirt* sound by naming Alice in Chains the best heavy metal band of 1993, and several singles from that album still receive a huge amount of airplay.

Alice in Chains were it — they were destined to be the next Guns N' Roses or Metallica. Bang your head, dude.

But then Alice in Chains come out with *Jar of Flies*, and several people may do a double-take to make sure that it isn't Alice in Wonderland's new album. Instead of the next Guns N' Roses or Metallica, you may be listening to the next Quiet Riot or Twisted Sister. ... What happened to those guys anyway?

Well, *Jar of Flies* isn't that bad, but it sure as hell is disappointing. The next Alice in Chains LP better be good and crunchy, or else fans may be digging up those old 45s of "We're Not Gonna Take It" or "Cum on Feel the Noise" out of pure frustration.

— JAKE BERG
Oregon Daily Emerald

QUICK PICKS

ROCKS THE SOCKS

SILKWORM — *In the West* (CZ) 3 1/2 stars. The beginning of this disc sounds like Pavement: noisy, jazzy rock iced with a layer of grunge. Then halfway through they prove this by blatantly lifting a Pavement guitar riff on "Raised by Tigers." Ear candy. If you like this, then check out *Built to Spill*, also on CZ.

THE FORBIDDEN DIMENSION — *Sin Gallery* (Cargo) 2 1/2 stars. Halloween surf. Or surf punks go trick-or-treating. Or The Beach Boys cover the soundtrack to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on cocaine, lots of cocaine.

THE BILLY NAYER SHOW — *The Billy Nayer Show and The Ketchup and Mustard Man* (Big Sam's Giant Records) 3 stars. They Might Be Giants in a lounge with an attitude. These two different discs might be hard to find around here, so just bug a record store clerk to order it.

STEVE FISK — *Over and Thru the Night* (K) 3 stars. Truly odd. This album is subtitled *A Ten Year Retrospective* and contains samples of his music in

the 1980s, including some work with the Screaming Trees. Buy this only if you enjoy schizophrenic stuff like *Negative Land* or the Boredoms. Some great samples and clips, with a remix of "Taxman" by The Beatles.

POP SICKLE — *Under the Influences* (CZ) 2 1/2 stars. Sugar sweet pop/punk songs done solid by a supergroup of sorts. Has members of Alcohol Funnycar, Coffin Break and The Gits.

THROW THAT BEAT IN THE GARBAGE

UNWOUND — *Fake Train* (Kill Rock Stars) 2 stars. This stumbles around in the gray area between alternative creativity and slightly repetitive irritating noise, more often than not on the latter side. Hate to dis this 'cause it's on the super cool Kill Rock Stars label, but it must be done.

VACANT LOT — *Wrong* (Shake/Cargo) 1 1/2 stars. Crappy pop/punk that tries to pass itself off as pure punk. Don't bother.

— SCOTT DREW
Music Director, KWVA



DOGMAN

★★★

GROUP: King's X
LABEL: Atlanta

King's X return to the hard rock scene with a bang. The new album, *Dogman*, turns up the power a notch while retaining that classic King's X feel to their music. King's X parted ways with long time producer Sam Taylor for this, fifth, outing. Taking the reigns of production is Brendan O'Brien, is known for his work with Pearl Jam and Stone Temple Pilots.

Even though O'Brien produced Pearl Jam and STP, he did not try to mold King's X in their image. No grunge-type changes were introduced. In short, he didn't

commercialize the band and make it sound like every thing else out there.

As for the album specifics, the title track is especially crunchy. Heavy riffs and a full sound help King's X take back the scepter of power from the rest of the rock'n'roll world and shove it down "alternative" bands' throats.

"Flies and Blue Skies," "Black the Sky" and "Sunshine Rain" are great King's X mood tunes, superior groove with just enough hard edge to keep you moving, or to make the drive in your car less stressful.

There's something for everyone on this album...even a pretty good live rendition of Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression."

—STEVE WOODWARD
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

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