

REVIEWS

PULSE EDITOR: REBECCA WILSON

Trip-hop's British eccentric releases tricky EP

■ The trip-hop artist returns on 'Mission Accomplished,' a four-song EP



CD REVIEW

Tricky 'Mission Accomplished'

Anti, Inc.

★★★★☆

By Dave Depper
For the Emerald

Is Tricky crap? I assume that this question is at the forefront of any record reviewer's thought process upon hearing any new release from the Bristol, England trip-hop pioneer. You see, Tricky rewrote the rules of music back in 1995 with his genre-shattering debut, "Maxinquaye."

It was a seamlessly cool record, with muted grooves, funky backing tracks, and soulful vocals from his then-chanteuse/paramour Martina Topley-Bird. The fact that Tricky's voice simply sounded like his vocal cords had been ripped from his throat, scraped over a cheese grater, and then lit on fire merely added to the coolness factor of "Maxinquaye." Critics drooled, "Maxinquaye" ended up near the top of just about every major music publication's year-end best-of list, and a whole lot of bored college students suddenly had another album to smoke weed to.

In the years that followed, howev-

er, Tricky soon fell from grace. Instead of releasing the equivalent of "Maxinquaye 2," Tricky opted to put out "Pre-Millennium Tension," an album that was almost completely unrelated to its predecessor in terms of its sonic coloring. Suddenly there were live instruments to the fore, crashing drums wrapping themselves around distorted guitars, jangling along with mutated keyboards. It all added up to a very dark sonic landscape, 180 degrees from the mellow mood of "Maxinquaye," and it pretty much scared off everybody that liked Tricky in the first place.

For some reason, Tricky seemed encouraged by this, and each album that he has released since "Pre-Millennium Tension" is arguably even harder to listen to than its predecessor (if you are ever faced with having a group of unwanted people in your home, simply play Tricky's 1996 "Nearly God" album at a loud volume. You will clear the room).

What is there to say about "Mission Accomplished?" First of all, it's not a proper release — it's merely an EP: four songs, to be exact. What's the big deal, then? Well, "Mission Accomplished" is Tricky's first release since last year's collaboration with DJ Muggs and Grease, "Juxtapose," and his first solo release since 1998's "Angels With Dirty Faces." It's also worth noting that despite the fact that Tricky hardly enjoys the huge fan base and critical favoritism that he once commanded, there is still

a large group of people the world over that quivers in anticipation every time a Tricky album comes out.

"Mission Accomplished" does not stray far from Tricky's past efforts stylistically. The first track on the CD is the title song, and it kicks off immediately with a frenetic drum track and barely discernible vocals. This is one of Tricky's hardest-rocking tracks in years. One point of note is the fact that the main hook of the song is samples from Peter Gabriel's "Big Time," of all things.

The second song on the disc is called "Crazy Claws," and it is my personal favorite track. This is the only song on "Mission Accomplished" that sounds like new terrain for Tricky. An elastic bassline slides around on top of some skittering drums while Tricky raps at breakneck pace over the goings on.

Up next is "Tricky versus Lynx (live)," which as far as I can tell is not live nor does it feature Tricky rapping. It's a relatively straightforward hip-hop track, with live drums and swift wordplay by Lynx (at least, I assume that it is Lynx; the CD offers the bare minimum of liner notes).

The final track is called "The Divine Comedy" and is at once the most confusing and the most enlightening track on the album. The lyrics describe in detail an incident that occurred at Polygram Records (Tricky's old label) involving racist remarks made by a high-



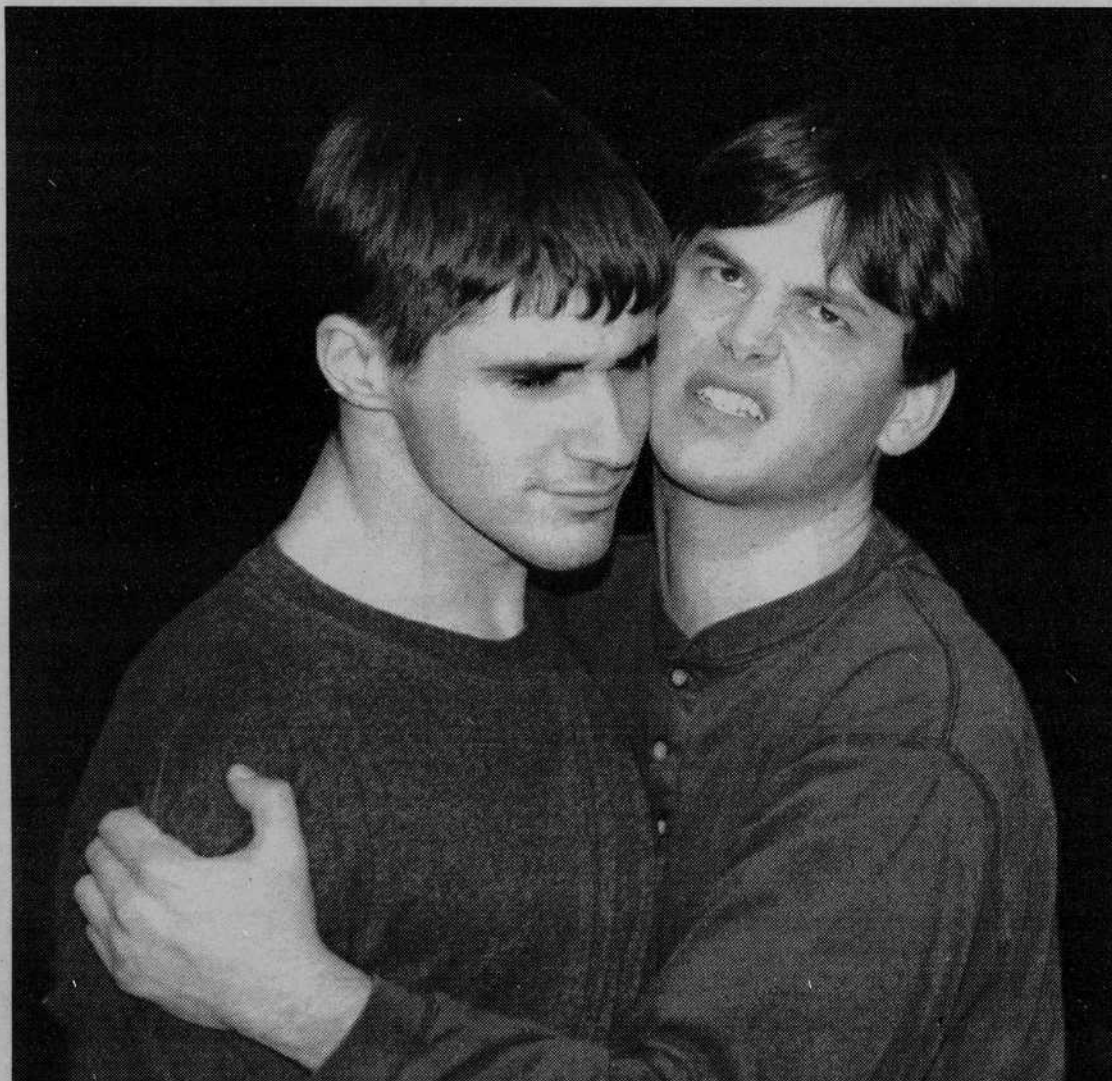
Courtesy Photo

ranking employee there. Tricky's rage is barely contained on this track and it's thrilling to listen to. Strangely enough, the backing track for this song is entirely lifted from the first song on his "Angels With Dirty Faces" album. This convinces me that Tricky is lazy, and I can't help but feel a little ripped off by the blatant recycling going on.

Adding to the ripped-off feeling is the fact that I bought these four

songs for \$8.99 (and that was on sale). The EP is ridiculously overpriced for its content. The music is undeniably good, but I can't help but feel that Tricky is in need of a little quick cash while we wait for his next full-length album (due later this year). I'm docking one star from this release because of its dubious value for the money, but the music contained within is classic Tricky. Is Tricky crap? You'll have to decide for yourself.

Modern context doesn't work for 17th century play



Adam Amato Emerald

Matt Chorpenning (left), grimaces as Phillip Meyer gripes about how false the world can sometimes be in "The Misanthrope."

■ Though the message is clear, 'The Misanthrope' at the Pocket Playhouse is a bit difficult to sit through



REVIEW

'The Misanthrope'

★★★★☆

By Mason West
Oregon Daily Emerald

Question: Is 17th-century French comedy still pertinent to our society?
Answer: You betcha.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere's play "The Misanthrope" is a social commentary about conflict between the desire to be sincere and the occasional need to lie. The test subject for Moliere's study is Alceste, a man who has become disenchanted with the insincere pleasantries that humans display toward one another in the pursuit of being polite and sociable. He has concluded that it is better to be honest to every man and woman and receive scorn for it than to be two-faced and loved by all.

Moliere's irony is that Adrienne, the woman Alceste loves, is more false to people than any other. Although she loves Alceste, she will go to great lengths to win favor from people in powerful positions.

The conflict of the play stems from Alceste's desire to be true and Adrienne's need to be false. As one could guess, it gets them both in a hefty amount of trouble.

Maximillian McCal, director of

this weekend's Pocket Playhouse production, has taken Moliere's commentary and set out to prove that society hasn't changed much in the last four centuries. Instead of a French mansion, the action unfolds in a current-day sorority house. Some of the character names have been altered to have a more modern ring, but the script's rhyme remains.

One of the biggest problems when changing the setting of a script is dealing with the baggage that the script carries. The two options for working with the rhyme in a modern context are to blow it so out of proportion that it's funny, or to make it so subtle that it is justified. McCal chose the latter, which was wise, but there are times when the actors stray from this goal.

Although the theme of the show is wonderful, it is difficult to sit through. Moliere was a master of language and enjoyed using it to the point of excess. Jarvis, Alceste's modern name, carries the bulk of the play's dialogue and can become annoying in his many misanthropic rants.

This is not the fault of the actor; rather, it is what Moliere wants to provoke in the audience. Many of his plays revolve around a detestable protagonist. It must be a French thing.

Conclusion: Go see this play if you know Moliere and enjoy his work, or if you feel like hearing a different opinion on how it is best to live in society. But though the theme spreads over all areas of society, the manner in which the play presents it doesn't hold much general appeal.