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Sunday, Feb. 20, 3 p.m.
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MUSIC

Fruit punch

A few queer CDs pack a wallop, a few plummet to the cold, cold ground



LE TIGRE
 Le Tigre • Mr. Lady

Riot grrrl graduates will hate me when I say this, but my first impressions of Kathleen Hanna's new band, Le Tigre, were not too complimentary.

On the group's self-titled release, the guitar lines and vocals sound infantile and annoying, and the production reeks of seemingly forced 1980s schtick. It seems that Hanna, the regionally legendary riot goddess known for her previous years in Bikini Kill, may have lost her bite.

However, something hit me during my third listen. Knee deep in the manic track "Hot Topic," I experienced a sort of cathartic revelation. As if I had just discovered beauty in an ugly baby, I suddenly caught myself thinking, "This is good. This is really, really good!"

Usually when I don't like an album at first, it either slowly grows on me or eventually ends up in the used bin at a local record store. Le Tigre is the only album I know that's convinced me to experience an instantaneous reversal of emotion.

Now I find it utterly infectious. I realize what makes this band so simply wonderful is how bad it tries to be. Hanna and her comrades, Sadie Benning and Johanna Fateman, have constructed a retro album that takes a cheap shot at every other retro album ever made. Le Tigre takes the best music of the '80s and early '90s, grinds it up into a mix of mock-

ery and appreciation, then spits it out like a rapid-fire blender without a lid.

The album's best song, "Deception" is driven by a simplistic, obvious, programmed drum beat with repetitive guitar line and vocals. Compositionally, the song's not challenging, difficult or different, the way some people believe quality music should be. It's just energetic, edgy and easy to dance to. For me, that's "quality" enough.

Later on the record, Le Tigre does its best Devo impersonation for "Let's Run," another upbeat pop-rock. Hanna's vocals don't let up for a second. She speak-sings with unquestionable confidence—she's constantly in your face and up your sleeve. As a wise soul once told me,

"Kathleen Hanna is so cool because she sings like a Valley Girl, but she sings about smart things."

"Eau D'Bedroom Dancing" is calmer and prettier than the rest of the songs, and "My My Metrocard" is a punchy ode with New York flavor.

All the songs on Le Tigre are thankfully short and to-the-point. With luck, the secret to this album will hit you with the same force that hit me. It's funny because it's serious, and good because it's bad.

FEATURING...
 Internal/External • K Records

Internal/External is an appropriate name for Paul Schuster's latest project.

Somewhat of a creative groundhog, Schuster has been a musical mainstay in the indie rock infrastructure of Olympia, Wash., for several years. Aside from playing in two bands, he has worked behind the scenes as a producer and engineer for acts like Julie Ruin and the Spells, and has been a musician on releases by Jason Traeger and the KG.

With *Featuring...*, Schuster plays the part of the artist and the director. His concept was to create a work of electronic music, then have his high-profile friends contribute their vocals, guitar lines or any other pertinent skill (i.e., Calvin Johnson on the melodica). The great thing is, it works.

just out

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Contact Katy @ (503) 236-1252

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