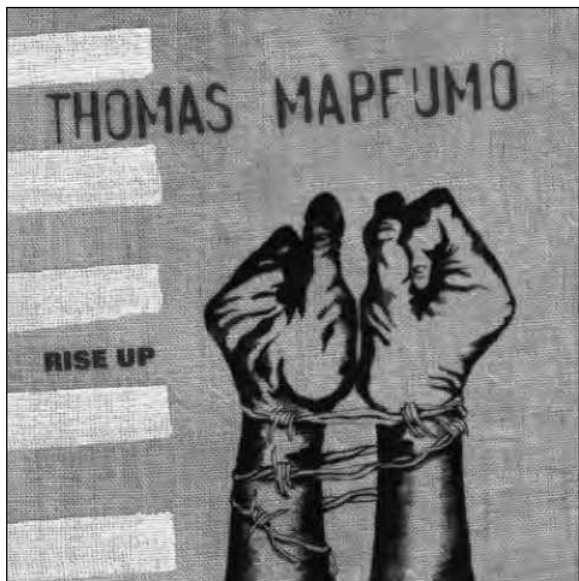




my fingers and shake my head and say, "Yeah, man, play it again," I'd be fine with hours of Teryl. She flutters up for a little vibrato at just the right points, purrs at the low notes, and never falters as she steadily produces the rest of the songs. Her voice is cute and cuddly, but it lacks the experience for some of the lyrics. *La Vie en Rose* could be the start of something great for this vocalist who has performed all over Eugene, but so far, she hasn't hit her stride. — Jef Stout

Testface, *Doctor Won't You Get Us to Dawn*

RELEASED: 2005, Sleepsound Records/Broken Sparrow Records

GENRE: Psych-folk/americana

There are a variety of adjectives that could be used to describe this album: Mellow or depressing for the sound, artsy or bizarre for the lyrics. But disturbing, stream-of-consciousness lyrics like "Chase the bloody trail back to the bleeding side of the wound/ Blame it on the bloodline/ Blame it on the wound," may turn some people off to the music.

The album paints a series of nightmarish pictures,

which seem like they must have been inspired by either a) horror movies b) hallucinations or c) drugs — lots of them. Don't get me wrong; I certainly enjoy some artists, like Dave Matthews and The Beatles, who have clearly dabbled in their share of mind-altering substances. But this music just gives me the heebie-jeebies. — Ursula Evans-Heritage

Intern Battle! New intern Emily has a different take on the Testface album. Read on...

Adjectives like mellow, artsy and stream-of-consciousness are usually regarded as praise when used to describe a band's sound, and without a doubt are compliments when applied to Testface's new album. Yes, it's mellow. But rightly so. The record takes on a dreamy and spaced-out feel, and the sheer ingenuity of the band shines in their slow-paced songs and abstract lyrics. The illusory vocals are a flawless fit for the backing instrumentals, serving as the perfect punctuation to a sound that is transcendent in its bitter-sweetness. — Emily Freeman

Thomas Mapfumo & The Blacks Unlimited, *Rise Up*

RELEASED: 2005,

Calabash Music

GENRE: World music

Mapfumo, one of the 20th century's greatest musicians, has lately been based in Eugene, where he recorded *Rise Up* with an 11-member band of Zimbabwean vets and local musicians on guitar, mbira (thumb-plucked metal harp), call and response vocals (featuring exquisite female singers), keyboards, bass, drums, flute and horns. Whether because of his long separation from Zimbabwe — his band has been threatened and harassed by dictator Robert Mugabe's increasingly repressive and corrupt government — upheaval in his record label, management and marriage, or his homeland's descent into poverty and dictatorship, *Rise Up* has a more somber feel than Mapfumo's other recent recordings.

But it continues the 60-year-old singer/songwriter's restless, bubbling fusion of various African musical forms with American soul and R&B, reggae, and more. Some lyrics (sung in Shona) call on listeners to rise up and take a stand against injustice; others decry immorality and corruption and other scourges of his homeland. Just as the

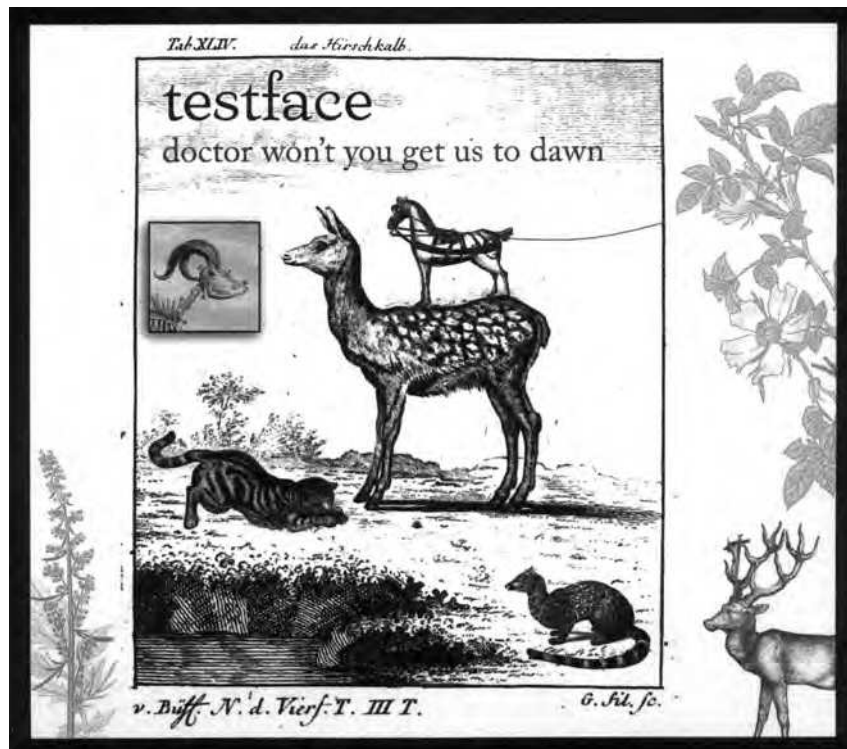
apartheid government did a quarter century ago during the black majority's liberation struggle, the Mugabe regime has banned Mapfumo's music from the country's radio stations. But his powerful message and danceable music are now crossing the planet via cyberspace — it's the first world music album released exclusively in digital format. Download it at thomasmampfumo.calabashmusic.com/ — Brett Campbell

Yeltsin, *We Will Be a Factory*

RELEASED: 2005, My Horoscope Records

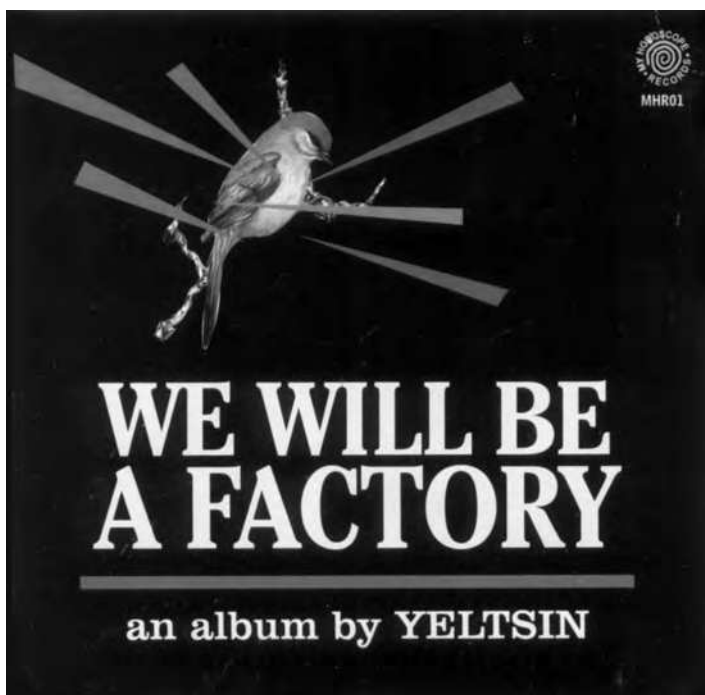
GENRE: Rock

A dozen or so Yeltsin shows in the last year and change would never have led me to think their first full-length album would open with an echoing guitar



line that sounds remarkably like a song from *The Crow* soundtrack. The likeness is short-lived, though, and only one of a variety of influences that infuse *We Will Be a Factory*. It's a solid, skillfully created rock album, marked throughout with distinctive instrumental melodies. "Sitting in the Corner" brings to mind The Replacements, roughly distorted and driven, with talky vocals; "Handful of Pennies," starts in Pixies territory, but shifts quickly to the staccato guitar that seems to be guitarist Jacob Pavlak's hallmark.

The album's main weakness is a tendency to pace the songs too similarly: Jivan Valpey's drumming is precise and lively, but can't always perk up the mid-tempo vocal melodies. A jaunty exception is the energetic "What Someone Said to Me," which borrows the riff from "My Sharona" or "Girl You Want" — take your pick — and runs it through a landscape of soaring guitars. The other highlight is "Evergreen," a catchy tune that imbues the instrumental parts perfectly with the nostalgia of the lyrics. If tempo's my only real complaint, Yeltsin is clearly doing a lot of things right. — Molly Templeton



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