

# MUSIC

## Indie band release promises wall-to-wall dance beat

### Inspiral Carpets

Revenge of the Goldfish

Mute/Electra Records

●● 1/2

Every once in a while, one hears a band that transcends definition ... a band whose CD one plays for months on end ... a band about which one testifies to all one's friends with the fervor of a snake handler. Alas, the Inspiral Carpets are not one of those bands. The Inspiral Carpets have been done before.

Granted, even though they're just one of those indie-dance bands from Manchester, they're not all that bad, and sometimes one catches oneself, well, dancing to it. But, then again, one catches oneself singing along to Lionel Richie's "Truly" every now and then.

For the benefit of those not ac-

### album

SUMMER BURKES

quainted with the Manchester dance scene, as well as those blindly accepting of any band from said area, the Inspiral Carpets are a guitar band with swingy and/or driving dance beats and lots of keyboards. Specifically, the vocalist sounds alternately like a deadpan Blur or Ned's Atomic Dustbin clone and a warbly, melodramatic '50s teen idol. The rhythm section (although somewhat repetitive) is tight and emphasized in the production. The guitars are nothing special, and the keyboards (usually quite effective in most Manchester bands) often drown out everything that may be worthwhile, especially when they play exactly in unison with the guitars, which is often. Lots of the songs could easily be accompaniment for the climax of any late '80s teenage movie, like where a guy wins a bike race or a girl

goes to the mall and finds the perfect prom dress.

Oh, and the lyrics are crap. They speak for themselves:

—"Take a look inside/Tell me what you see/There's someone there/That shouldn't be" ("Saviour").

—"It's his mind playing games/Guilt is a terrorist/Holds his mind as a hostage" ("Smoking Her Clothes").

—"The sky is red/The sea is blue/God made the distance/Between me and you" ("Here Comes The Flood").

I could go on. Bleccchh.

To be fair, a few songs are actually quite good. The single, "Two Worlds Collide," has a nice hook and great vocal harmonies. "Irresistible Force" sounds kind of like U2's "Desire" sometimes but has neat guitars and tribal drums and he sings through a distorter. And "Rain Song" starts off with a folksy vocal/electric guitar duo thingy and segues into something like a Ride song, but (naturally) nowhere near as good. The lyrics are still crap.

If you have \$8 to spare, are an An-



Who says Izod tobaggans are out?

glophile wildly obsessed with certain bands solely because of their nationality and aren't doing anything Saturday night, the Inspiral Carpets are playing

at the Cat's Cradle. But make sure to miss the opening band, Sunscreen, one of the most mind-numbingly rapid dance bands to venture across the Pond.

## Latest chunk of super local band rocks

### Superchunk

On the Mouth

Merge

●●● 1/2

Even those of you only remotely cognizant of the music mecca that has evolved from this "sleepy southern town" have heard of Superchunk. In fact, you've probably read so much about them that you feel like you might blow a few superchunks if you see their name again. Well grab your Dramamine, because Chapel Hill's premier quartet have just released another full-length disc for your sonic perusal.

On the Mouth is Superchunk's third album (fourth if you count their collection of singles), and is the next logical step for these purveyors of post-punk pop perfection. Their first album was a promising if medium-fi collection of aggressive, sloppy, and fun tunes. Last year's *No Pocky For Kitty* showed a tremendous amount of progress, with notable advances in both songwriting and tightness, while producer Steve Albini's ear for "Volume! Volume! Volume!" provided both clarity and kick. Unfortunately, both albums suffered from a lack of depth, with songs running the gamut from "uptempo distorto-pop" to "midtempo distorto-pop."

The best feature of *On The Mouth* is that it transcends the one-dimensionality which plagued their earlier efforts. To be sure, all the staples are there, the singing/yelling, Mac and Jim's duelling distortion pedals, and hardcore beats

### album

GRANT TENNILLE

all about. As for the songs, the gang can perform a rickety tomy with their eyes closed by now, as evidenced on tracks like "Precision Auto" and "For Tension." However, acoustic guitars and the occasional slow number pop up here and there, and the somewhat lazy vibes which permeates a few tracks make for a more diverse, and therefore more

interesting album.

Guitarist Jim Wilbur described the album as "very punk." This pertains not only to some of the songs, but also the production as well. This is the album's one drawback, and in this reviewer's eyes, a pretty important one. Although not as muddy as the first, *Mouth* features a surprisingly flaccid sound of distant vocals and tame drums, far from the power they display live or on their last record. If one gets beyond that weakness, however, *On The Mouth* offers a solid 45 minutes of rockin' tunes, which more often are worth your time.



Superchunk tells the time by the pendulum in Lara's hair

### ratings

- — forget it
- — wait for a bargain bin buy
- — tape it from a friend
- — buy it
- — buy two copies

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