

Sebadoh: a new religion

Jonathan White
Staff Writer

I was sitting in church last week...Preacher, he says, "You too can be a disciple. Come out with it! Rise up off your feet and meet me, right here, and let us all give it up for God!" At this particular moment I jumped up, hands outstretched to the heavens, and belted, "I'm so jealous of Jesus!"

I have discovered a new religion (in music, that is). Lou Barlow and Eric Gaffney are Sebadoh, a new group fallen from grace. The album is titled *The Freed Weed*, formerly two albums that were originally released on cassette.

But now you can get *Weed Forestin* and *The Freed Man* on one compact disc! Both albums

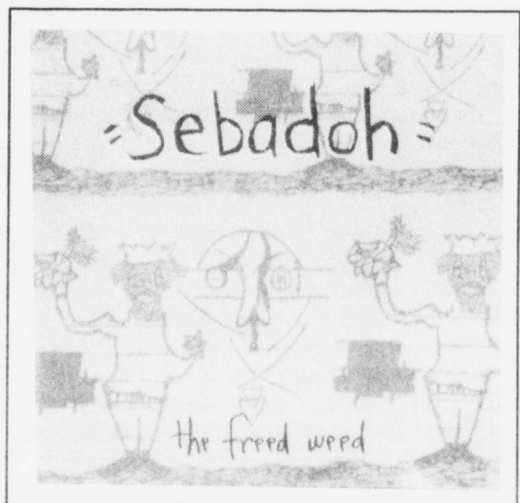


Photo by Carl Beehler

Sebadoh *The Freed Weed*

include, what I would venture to call, Well-Fed-Dead-Folk songs. The albums sound like they were recorded on a 4-track recording

instrument filled with static, weeping vocals, out-of-tune acoustic guitars, and some misplaced percussion.

Lou Barlow is no newcomer to this sound; he used to be the bass player for Dinosaur Jr. You can hear the beginning of his sound in "Poledo" off of Dinosaur Jr.'s *You're Living All Over Me*.

Songs ranging from the self-affirming "Jealous Jesus," to the haunting "Sexual Confusion," to the self-destructing "Punch in the Nose" will stick in your head just like a crown of thorns.

The Kountess Suggests

Louisa Spaventa
Staff Writer

More Boy, Less Friend from **Sprinkler:**

Spouts with power a skillful flow that at times reaches the impact of a hurricane and strips you of your skin so that you submit to the forces of greater music. Vocals so agreeable you could shake their hands and drum beats that lead you into deep, confusing, metallic blue catacombs. You are bridled with fear of good music; "Jr. Loaded" and "Blind" hit the windshield with terrifying velocity. In your zombified state you accept the fever of Sprinkler-pick of the litter for 1993.

Smeared from **Sloan:**

The epitome of a college target band. Well-mapped lyrics and melodies that live up to your wildest dreams. Like getting a fantastic back rub, each chorus puts pressure on the tight muscles around the shoulder blades and neck. You get great happiness by hearing songs live beyond their potential, kinetically reaching new plateaus. Very well produced—palatable like rubbery eggs, but almost too perfect to take out of the package. Suggested tracks: "Underwhelmed," "Left of Center," (a la Lou Reed), and "Two Seater" (a distortion party).

Na Vucca Do Lupu from **Three Mile Pilot:**



Photo by Carl Beehler

Sprinkler

One day a rubberband wrapped itself around a lemon. Together, these things bounced downstairs to the musty, damp, rat-loving basement and crawled into a mildewed, velvet coffin where they sang Fugazi songs to each other while drunk on Mad Dog 20/20 and played bass till daylight. This might somewhat describe the surreal atmosphere of this album's addictive content. Try "Slow Hand" or "Horse Sweat."

Oren Bloedow (self-titled):

He's a man. He writes songs. He's great. Funktual song pattern led by princely vocals and punctuated by assorted horns. Would appeal to the Joe Jackson fans to the Pavement audience (big, wide gap). Lyrics worthy of investigation and a very loose-collared feel to the whole project. "Sleaziness

is when you want something/ That you think you don't deserve/ And you try to get it in a way that/ Someone who didn't deserve it would" (from "Sleaziness").

Mike Livingston
Staff Writer

FLASHBACK: Late 1991. George Bush does not plan to attend the unprecedented U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, the Earth Summit). Environmental groups yell and scream until he changes his mind: he'll attend, he says, but he won't sign the critical Biodiversity treaty or the moratorium on the export of toxic waste. He won't sign anything. But he's the Environmental President, and he'd be happy to have his picture taken at UNCED.

FLASHBACK: June 1992. Thousands of students, some on hunger strike, rally and keep vigil on six continents. Their message, signed by student groups from over 120 nations: The Earth Summit has been sabotaged. If the U.S. doesn't acknowledge the treaties, why bother? It's just a photo-op for George.

FLASHBACK: November 3, 1992. The government of the United States is ousted.

This week: Our first post-Cold War government is installed, and the nation celebrates with an involved and hopeful spirit it has not known since the end of World War II. Still, the new President hasn't promised to sign the UNCED treaties, and the new Senate hasn't promised to ratify them. The North American Free Trade Agreement promises to be one of the major controversies of the decade. We're still policing the world, at least when we feel like it. But is it possible—having unloaded the dead weight of the Reaganbush Era—to pilot the listing hulk of the Earth Summit along the course to sustainable global community?

QUNO director Steve Collett will join us next week to address the question in detail; meanwhile, we can try a quick measurement of the distance between activists' dreams and the nation's reality. It's simple: how does the nation

feel?

During the holidays, *Washingtonian* magazine asked members of D.C.'s cultural establishment—journalists, bookstore owners, performing artists—how they expected the new government to affect the social atmosphere of the city. (Maybe it's an odd question, but consider: the whole Federal establishment is about to get younger, more energetic, and more optimistic. If Washington—traditionally an ulcer of a town—is becoming kinder-gentler, so will the Federal government itself, and so too the country.)

The magazine reported plenty of optimism, but the striking property of the public mood is that it's decentralized, not centered on Clinton; as one respondent explained, Clinton is just a catalyst, nudging the national psyche past the Reagan Era so "people... feel better about themselves, and that has a positive effect."

A caterer saw official government events becoming more relaxed and lively. A bookseller saw more people reading about public policy and current issues—taking an interest in participatory democracy. And even Tom Shales, the *Washington Post's* designated cynic, looked for "a new positivism on TV and on talk shows... we've had enough whining."

If "the optimism thing" catches on, and isn't derailed by continued "maneuvers" in Iraq (pay attention, Bill), then a nation so excited can accomplish a lot. Even, with patience, meaningful strides toward sustainable economy.

George Bush swerved, and the Earth Summit was a big car wreck. To our credit as a nation, we resisted the morbid urge to stop and rubberneck, or do further damage with our bungling first aid. We got ourselves a new driver and new maps, and -- as then-Senator Gore said in his victory speech -- it is time for us to go.



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