

NEW MUSIC

■ **These Animal Men:
Accidents Waiting to
Happen/BT = OK**

⇒ **These Animal Men**
Accident and Emergency

BY PAIGE MCRAE
Features Music Critic

These Animal Men are a bevy of beauties from Brighton England with spiky black hair and clad in black leather. Their debut album, *C'mon Join the High So-*

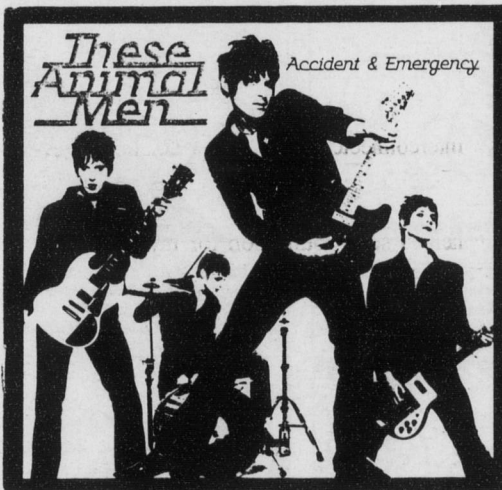


PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGIN RECORDS

ciety, with its organ hooks and super-charged guitar, was recklessly jubilant in spirit.

Their latest, *Accident & Emergency*, is still reckless to be sure, but the jubilation appears to have given way to a slightly more world-weary attitude. This album is perhaps best described as a glimpse into what has happened now that they've joined that high society of dissipated mods.

"In spite of it all, I'm alive." lead singer Boag proclaims on "24 Hours to Live" and the statement stands alongside a catchy chorus. Guitarist Julian Hewings does some vocals on "New Wave Girl" and "Ambulance Man" which are quite endearing in a Sid Vicious sort of way. The organs, which earlier seemed more prominent, are now submerged under guitar lines that Johnny Thunders or Peter Perrett from the Only Ones would

It's Time to Play: Cafeteria Quiz
1. What Important Problems With the Caf were corrected by recent renovations?
A. Heat Stroke Caused by lack of shade from green awnings
B. Splinter Fatalities caused by unsurfaced tables
C. Mental Atrophy caused by lack of confusion during food service

2. Which students were these renovations designed to please?
A. Main Campus
B. CCE
C. Day Students
Sorry Times Up! That was a trick question. These superficial improvements were only to attract perspectives, and nobody cares what students want.

It's like they took a huge toxic waste dump in the middle of campus, and planted flowers around it.
The students reaction:
oooh flowers!

surely recognize.

"Riverboat Captain" finds the Animal Men straying from the urban jungle into the muddy banks of the Mississippi. It is a murderer's confession with the chilling statement that "he won't get one second older." The murky-sounding vocals and shuffling drums further enhance this dark revenge fantasy.

However, amid the unapologetic attitude, there are moments of vulnerability. "When Your hands are Tied" actually sounds a bit fragile with its chime-like keyboards and Boag's intimate vocal phrasing. He laments the gulf that has grown between himself and his increasingly cold lover, saying "Within that look I get nervous/ for the damage that you'll do." Julian with his frantic boyish voice feels "trapped, mapped/ full of boys lies."

The best point to get acquainted with These Animal Men is *C'mon Join the High Society*, but fans might be pleased to see the Animal Men pushing their boundaries and further exploring that connection between the energy of the early guitar-smashing Who and the hellbent attitude of Johnny Thunders.

⇒ **BT**

ESCM

BY JEFF IRVING
Features Music Critic

Electronic music oftentimes sounds cool, but for many it doesn't hold up for too long. Either the sounds tend to be nondescript and aimed strictly at the converted, a stubborn artist insists on playing only the most abrasive, arrhythmic or otherwise difficult music, or the music panders to the most generic lowest common dancefloor denominator.

Casual listeners aren't always going to see what's so great about some

obscure, generic-sounding ambient artist. The same people may see an electro-world far beyond Prodigy or the Chemical Brothers, but don't want to listen to the skewed clattering of Aphex Twin or the test-tone wallpaper of Panasonic.

Brian Transeau (BT) has released an album that would appeal to those who search for accessible-but-not-dumbed-down dance music that crosses enough subgenres to remain interesting. He was even a classically trained musician long before venturing into electronic music, and it shows. Acoustic instruments hold equal footing with the binary code-generated sounds, and Transeau can write a very good, structured song when he wants to.

Human elements and spirituality are ever abundant in his work. It's no wonder that Tori Amos readily worked with him on the song "Blue skies" (which, unfortunately, is not on this album.)

ESCM (which stands for "Electric Skychurch Music") is testament to the fact that electronic music needn't be cold and robotic. I think that the best songs here are the most pop oriented ones.

They show where dance music has potential to hold up on the dancefloor and on headphones. "Remember" is what would happen if "Live To Tell"-era Madonna suddenly became the frontperson of New Order in their prime, and Underworld produced them. There are enough hooks and dynamic changes to keep it interesting for its eight-minute duration.

"Lullaby for Gaia" is the sound of

the sun coming out after a heavy rain-storm or flood, and you know that things are going to be lovely for the rest of your life. A few other tracks have jungle-ish beats, and "Love, Peace, and Grease" is a Chemical Brothers/ Daft Punk-like dancefloor would-be hit, complete with old school hip-hop samples. Richard Butler of Psychedelic Furs/Love Spit Love fame is even rumored to have an uncredited vocal cameo on this album, but I still haven't found it.

This isn't to say that the album is completely without fault. There's a lot of excellent music here, but Transeau loves to do long, overblown piano intros or faux-ambient soundscapes that must be trudged through to get to a lot of the good stuff. Kind of like someone making you listen to Yanni or New Age music fading into an Underworld song. The NIN-kowtowing of "Solar Plexus" was

done to death (and better by Stabbing Westward back in '94. For me, it's only justification lies in the fact that it fades into a beautiful Tori-ish piano piece about halfway through.

Even with all of its problems, which are mainly knowing what does and doesn't work (hopefully,

as he gets more experience, he'll better utilize the Yanni-isms,) this is a very good album. It may not convince anti-electronica types to go and buy drum and bass albums, but it does have a very soulful, human side.

ESCM also shows that dance music needn't forsake emotion or songcraft to still work. Brian, we love ya. Keep it up.

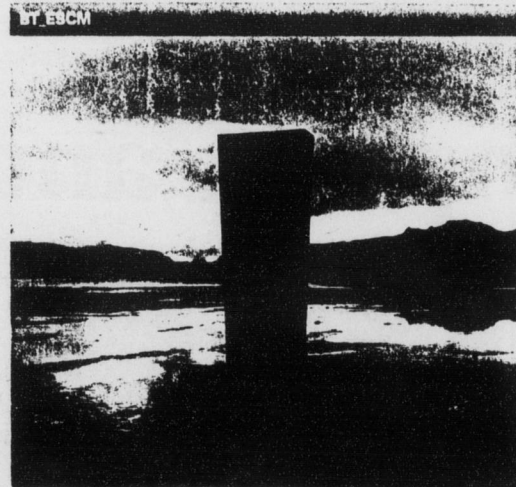


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