

Bardo Pond's Album Hypnotic, Essential

Rockers, let's chat about an album which will push you that much closer to tossing out your lame *this is not a Fugazi t-shirt* and honing that hashish habit.

If I ever said that I'd given Philadelphia more than a passing nod aside from cheese steaks and Zipperhead, color me a fibber. However, I'm sure that singer-songwriter Bob Dylan (aka Robert Zimmerman) had this very situation in mind when he penned his 1964 Top 20 hit, "The Times They Are a-Changin'," because indeed, they are a-changin' and Bardo Pond is such the catalyst. Never has the Pa. license plate prophesy been more true than in this instance, for you do, in fact, have a friend in Pennsylvania, and it is *High Frequencies*, the third full-length from this cheeba-rock quintet coming from the city of brotherly love.

If you're a smart one, you caught the first and/or second album and you're familiar with the pond of bardo, a sucking whirlpool of swirling drone. However, if you're a bit... shall we say, "special," then try this experiment/head game: go into any south campus rest room and hum, starting with a low pitch, and then slowly and "cool glissando" increase the pitch upwards until you hear the sinks rumble with you and echo about the room.

Try next to match the natural frequency of the toilet bowl, and then perhaps the urinal. Not only was that entertaining in itself, but you've also gleaned the basic gist of the Bardo Pond's first two albums' majesty. Now, forget all that, because the third album marks a new direction sans the white noise of albums past.

Imagine this, you: suppose I was to put the Cowboy Junkies' *Trinity Sessions* on the turntable, and then what if I ran that through some heavy digital delay and light distortion, and did I forget to mention that I was listening to the result in that mysterious echoing stair step cave outside the design studio at NCSU?

Envision all that, or you could dig this new Bardo Pond album because that's exactly where it's at. Put me in a hammock with an ice cold pitcher of Luzianne and a newspaper over my eyes in mid-May listening to either of the aforementioned hypnotic set-ups and look! You've made a white boy with a toothy smile. And you too can be that happy white boy.

You know, I couldn't begin to explain to you why the hammock is essential because I'm not a leisure critic perse, and I'm not really know if the tea has to be Luzianne or not, or heck, even if it has to be iced for that matter.

But you give me the rocks, and I'll chisel out track by track why this Bardo Pond CD is what's down, cold-kicking it Moses-style. Here's some highlights plus the definitions of words in the song titles which I didn't know (definitions paraphrased from 1974 edition of *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*).

From the get-go, like three minutes of sonic monotony drones before the massive power-chord dirge-riffage of "Limerick" even kicks in, oh hell yes. "Tantric" (pertaining to the later Hindu scriptures usually dealing with the worship of Shakti) Porno" dreamily wafts until whupping up on you with lumbering distorted exclamations. Bardo Pond pulls out the psychedelical album's proverbial sitar for one song, adding further spice to the churning dish that is "Wank." "The High Frequency" reminds this one of early seventies rockers Jade Warrior, what with vocalist Isobel picking up her flute for one of the relatively few times on the album, what with its prominence on the earlier two records.

"Sometimes Words" is one of three songs highly derivative (and delightfully so, at that) of the Cowboy Junkies' lazy formula. "Yellow Turbin (Latin for whirlwind)" lives up to its name, dancing around in heavy circles inching towards incarnate chaos.

"Tapir [a nocturnal ungulate related to the horse and rhinoceros] Song" clumsily lopes along, pretty truthful to the image I derive from the definition. *High Frequencies* closes with my favorite piece, something called "RM," which might stand for "Ripped-off Movements," since the song seems practically based on the Crystallized Movements' song "This Dimming Today." Both are fine works, might I add.

So rocker, what's it gonna be? Another year of punk rock moshpits and crowd-surfing assholes or will you turn on to churning electric cathedral music? Buy this record, fool, you deserve better.

BARRY SUMMERLIN
Music Review
Barlo Pond
High Frequencies
(Matador Records)
A+

Second Sandler Comedy CD Not for Children's Ears

In recent years there has been a mass exodus that has left "Saturday Night Live" awash in a sea of new cast members. Phil Hartman, Kevin Nealon, Chris Farley and Janeane Garofalo are just a few of those who bailed for various reasons, seeking film careers and/or a change of pace.

Of those who fled, Adam Sandler is arguably faring best, second only to Hartman. Fresh from his second starring role in a feature film and a sold-out college and small venue tour this winter, Sandler serves a follow-up to *They're All Gonna Laugh At You!* with his second full-length comedy album, *What The Hell Happened To Me?*

BRENT SIMON
Comedy Album Review
Adam Sandler
What the Hell Happened to Me?
B

At his best, Sandler can offer such silly, earnest-boy comedy that he actually comes off as one of our own renegade family members, an emotionally unstable cousin, perhaps.

But if you're familiar with him only through "SNL" and his two juvenile film releases, you're missing quite another side of Mr. Sandler, as his two comedy albums have both been exercises in sheer vulgarity. Not that there's necessarily anything wrong with that.

The album opens with one of its strongest tracks, "Joining The Cult," a hilarious bit in which Sandler attempts to recruit a friend into a sun-fearing religious cult, using the logic that since he sacrificed by watching the friend's TV program instead of Monday Night Football, the friend should repay the favor. The first half of *What The Hell...?* works quite well, with "The Goat" offering eight minutes of random, oft-vulgar free association comedy between several friends and a talking goat.

"The Hypnotist" travels familiar ground with its focus on flatulence, though Kevin Nealon's straightman bit actually draws a few laughs.

The album reaches its kooky apex halfway through with "Do It For Your Mama," in which Sandler plays a mother exhorting her children to engage in a little autoeroticism. Strange, very strange.

In addition to the comedy segments, there are seven of Sandler's typically wacky little ditties. While the majority of the musical pieces are more slickly produced than the offerings of *They're All Gonna Laugh At You!*, the songs as a whole are

generally a cut below Sandler's previous efforts. "The Chanukah Song" (previously featured on "SNL"), and the reggae-themed "Ode To My Car" stand out as the best efforts.

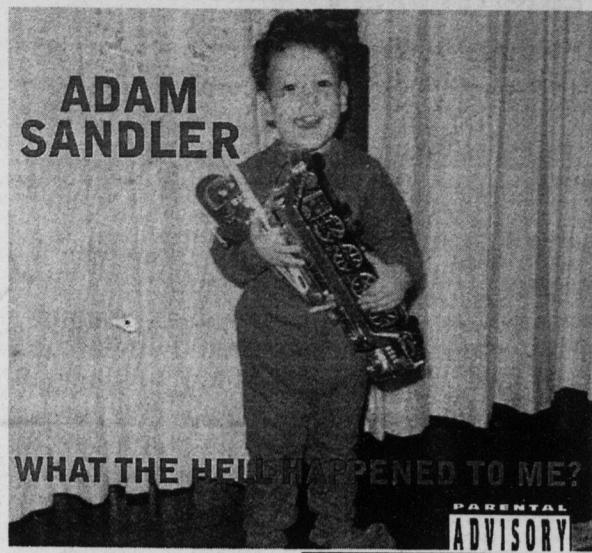
The oddly assaulting "Steve Polychronopolous" mainly seems like an excuse to randomly curse, while Sandler's nonsensical ode to grandmothers, "Dip Doodle," slips into borderline irritation and proves that substituting gibberish in the place of lyrics only works so many times.

Despite the NC-17 language on his two comedy albums, Sandler has strong family ties that run throughout his work, popping up in not only his songs, but also his films.

While "Billy Madison" and "Happy Gilmore" both streamlined Sandler's humor by reigning in and restricting his language, they also helped provide some genuinely funny moments. One is often forced to think more creatively when there is some sort of limit to the cursing that can take place—witness Sandler's verbal backhand of Bob Barker ("The price is wrong, bitch!") in "Happy Gilmore." On *What The Hell...?* Sandler seems out to garner a personal reprimand from Bob Dole.

While the album lags a bit behind the pace of his debut effort, *What The Hell Happened To Me?* ultimately provides a fair number of laughs.

Sandler's so-odd-you-have-to-laugh



humor and over-the-top energy save several of the weaker bits. The bottom line, of course, is that if you blush easily at the mention of goat genitals or masturbation, this album's not quite in your age bracket.

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