

We've all heard it before, 10 times over

Eleventh Dream Day

Lived To Tell
Atlantic Records
● 1/2

It is neat to see a well-distributed jangle/grunge-guitar-driven band coming out of the Chicago area these days. The waxy glam acid-house headquarters is home to Eleventh Dream Day, a three-male, one-female 'progressive' rock band with looks reminiscent of early Talking Heads and Pixies.

Unfortunately, the music is what matters, and Eleventh Dream Day's fourth LP and second major-label effort, *Lived To Tell*, has already been told and told, over and over again. Sorry, but the 13-track album is crusty, grotesquely cliché, relentlessly sterile and not moving at all.

"Strung Up And/Or Out" is the second side's opener that sounds like Karen Carpenter was held at gunpoint and forced to sing, some high school acne-plagued rock god wannabe wrote the panzy chord changes, Michael Jackson played drums and Mr. Green Jeans produced it.

"I wake up in the morning/ I really

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can't avoid it ... Sometimes I get frustrated/ And I treat you kind of rough" are the words we get. Kind of unnecessary and overstated, like most of the music on the album.

Their sound is way B-rate in progressive rock circles, clinging to the likes of the Smithereens, Guadalcanal Diary and Dreams So Real. It's just so rote, so predictable. In a word, outdated.

This is unfortunate when drummer-vocalist-wife Janet Beveridge Bean and vocalist-guitarist-husband Rick Rizzo manage to strike some great harmonies, like on the upbeat, hillbilly rocker "Trouble," and sap ballad "It's All A Game." Rizzo, however, makes his band sound a lot like the Hooters when he sings alone.

Check these lyrics: "Life is a burning flame/ And you are the wind," from "Trouble," or "You had angels' wings/ You weren't a bad guy," from "Angels Spread Your Wings." More rank than regular-flavored Quaker oatmeal, even if it's only been sitting out for two hours, this stuff makes this overslept quartet seem as though English is their third or fourth language.



Douglas McCombs, Janet Beveridge Bean, Rick Rizzo and Baird Figi staring at us

Gosh, listening to this band is not fun at all. I'd rather count telephone poles on a train ride across Yugoslavia after eating an actual dog hamburger in 95-degree weather. (I have done

that and yes, I lived to tell ...) So if you are a middle-of-the-road, tell-me-the-answer-because-I-don't-get-the-joke, I'd-rather-fart-really-loud-in-public-than-go-down-the-water-slide-first, pajama-with-the-

feet-attached-wearing, toothpaste-tube-squeezing-from-the-bottom-only-and-then-rolling-it-up type, this simply record is for you. Otherwise, save your money and go see *Silence of the Lambs*.

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Paradoxical virtuosity in a one-man show

Dinosaur Jr.

Green Mind
Warner Bros.
●●●●

Oh lovely, lovely angst. Dinosaur Jr.'s fourth LP, and first on Warner Brothers, is a very clean mess of streamlined noise and poised shouting.

J Mascis, Dinosaur Jr.'s godhead, "produced, performed and wrote (except where noted inside)" *Green Mind*, making this arguable solo effort exceptionally cohesive. This is strikingly evident in the individual

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calamity and random explosiveness of each track.

"The Wagon" is the first single, complete with MTV video, thanks to big ol' Warner Brothers, and it accurately sets the raucous tone for the rest of the album.

"I really want to know you/ but you don't even know you" are vintage Mascis lyrics, indicative of his clever yet all the while skewed approach to subject, nevertheless confirming his conviction in it, screaming to get the words out.

On the title track, which is last in order, he sings, "It's kind of lame to let it slide/ though either way I haven't tried," Mascis concludes an exhaustive yet satisfying listen leaving a bitter taste. What's up here?

"Puke & Cry" is the album's most likeable song on first listen, revolving around a catchy "Come on down"

whine-chorus atop rapid-synched snare cracks that instill contrasting images of head-banging with dance-floor butt-moving.

Moreover, *Green Mind* is bolstered by its fine production quality. (Hey, could it be because of Warner Brothers' mighty big shoes?) Never has angst sounded so clear. Part-time Dinosaur Jr. drummer Murph plays drums on three tracks, but his domineering power-style rhythm is kept consistent throughout the album, which is a big plus.

Other than that, Mascis is the whole show, writing about nothing radical or earth-shattering, but always from a decisively genuine standpoint. He is a little confused, a little hurt and best guess says he's a full-bred introvert. Great, because that's the magic potion.

Mascis' impassioned delivery triggers Westerberg, Black Francis (Pixies) and Dave Pirner (Soul Asylum) comparisons, but he sounds more boyish and reverted than any of them.

These are words from the album's best groove, a crispy funk guitar piece

with sharp drums and a clinching fuzz bass backbone, "Muck." "I know these things have passed you by/ I know it's tough to even try/ It's such a different kind of scene/ I know you don't know what I mean ... Whenever you get into my face/ There's something strange I start to taste ..."

Mascis sings this one much like the rest, as if he's been in a hot tub for three and a half hours sipping whisky sours while watching CNN reruns.

The intrigue in such twisting and wrenching lyrics atop the palatable heap of guitar punch-rock just makes J Mascis, his band and this album in particular a superb plunge into packaged virtuosity wrought with paradox, angst and loudness. Some may just say noise, but they're the ones with too much cheek cement, the ones who usually just skim the pool's surface with their toes, never taking the plunge.

What a terribly dandy LP from Dinosaur Jr. *Green Mind* is a work of conceptual ambiguity and it's meant to be played very loud. Plus, no one can touch the cover sleeve ...

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