

LEFT OF THE DIAL



The Replacements *Don't You Know Who I Think I Was? Best of The Replacements* (Sire/Reprise/Rhino)

For my nickel, the Replacements are the greatest American band of the last 25 years. And, to quote a once-scruffy Buffalo trio who stole every move in the Replacements' playbook, "I ain't the only one." Bands like Soul Asylum, Nirvana, Wilco, Superchunk and (of course) the Goo Goo Dolls each show a heavy influence and owe a debt to the Minneapolis quartet, while generations of rock critics, who fell over themselves to praise the band since it first appeared in 1981, continue to celebrate their music and what it represents long after the band's demise. Sure, the Mats (as the band will be forever be known to admirers, fanatics and scholars of underground rock) have a pack of perfect songs strewn with powerful hooks and nimbly scale the human scope, capturing immature fun and jest, vigor and vitriol, heartache, loss and plenty of self-doubt. But there's more to it. The band's music has retained an unfettered purity for 15 years since frontman Paul Westerberg dissolved them. The legend of their inebriated power trash pop and unkempt bash and punk looms large for believers in the great rock-and-roll ideal. The Mats never achieved the arena-packing success that was supposed to be theirs for the taking, and that is part of their enduring shine: They remained the outsider losers that they supposed themselves to be. It was never just posture for the Replacements, either. They really were, more or less, a bunch of booze-sodden knuckleheads from Minnesota with nothing better to do than play in a band and make records with their hearts on their sleeves. In a music marketplace that has become more and more a "music industry," the Replacements remain the heroes who refused to follow the rules, split while they were still relevant and just happened to leave behind a good-fuckin'-lookin' corpse in the form of their collection of songs. That legacy is here suspended in 18 of the band's finest moments. For the first time both the Twin Tone Records and Sire eras are collected side by side, plus two newly recorded tracks by the surviving, reconvened core of the band. There's not a wasted track on *Don't You Know Who I Think I Was?*, starting from the glory of the band's early years, like the unbridled attack of "Shiftless When Idle," to Westerberg's pensive one-man band on "Within Your Reach." The band's middle period, which arguably proved to be their finest, is represented by two from the album *Tim*, with the "displaced generation" punk epic "Bastards of Young" and the masterful love muse (written to both the girl who got away and to rock and roll itself) "Left of the Dial," as well as a few from *Pleased to Meet Me* ("Alex Chilton," "Skyway," "Can't Hardly Wait"). Of the new tracks, "Message to the Boys" solidly recreates the band's balanced blister and bittersweetness; it's less like a "we're back" reunion and more of a hearty goodbye wave. "Best of" just doesn't get any better than this.

—donny kutzbach



Demolition Doll Rods *There is a Difference* (Swami)

Sex-fueled shock rock tends to be the domain of men, or so I've always thought. Of course, the Cramps have Poison Ivy, Nashville Pussy has Blaine Cartwright (and the ever-changing bassist du jour), Bongwater had Ann Magnuson and there have been girls in Gwar, though not since Slymenstra Hymen's retirement in 2002. But when a band is gritty, vulgar, seedy, tawdry and also fueled by a woman, it imbues a different vibe. For me, I can laugh a little easier knowing that Margaret Doll Rod—macrobiotic intellectual feminist—has written most of the lyrics. The Dolls' reputation for raunchiness has as much to do with their barely clothed onstage antics as it does with the lyrics—which, truth be told, really aren't *all* that lurid or offensive. This is especially true on their latest album, the fourth release for the band and the first with its new drummer. Tia "Baby Doll" Doll Rod is in for former percussionist Christine "Thumper" Doll Rod—Margaret's biological sister—and she doesn't seem to miss a beat. It might have been an uncomfortable situation for her—infiltrating this tight-knit group that has always been a family affair (former Gories guitarist Dan Kruha, a.k.a. Danny Doll Rod, is Margaret's significant other)—but if so there's no evidence to be heard on the album. Though song titles like "Booty Call" and "Baby Say Unh!" may sound titillating, there's really nothing on *There is a Difference* that should get anybody's panties in a bunch—at least not anything that's too easily deciphered by the naked ear. While the band does have things in common with other trash-thrash rockers, namely Nashville Pussy with its own romantic duo (Cartwright and hubby Ruyter Suys are the driving force behind the band), the highly listenable blues/grunge music the Dolls make sets them a bit apart, as does the gravelly, engine-revving purr of Margaret's lead vocals (she can let loose like Patti Smith). Unlike any of the other bands mentioned, theirs is a CD I actually put on at home just to listen to. Gwar may be great fun on stage—and this is arguable, I know—but wouldn't last a minute in the CD changer.

—k. o'day



Group name: Siriun Geometry

When/where playing this week?

Monday, June 26 at Palmeri's, 1514 Pine Avenue, Niagara Falls. As part of the UNITE! Tour with metal/punk bands Lexsis Jumps and One Win Choice.

Band members?

Danny J—vox and bass

Johnny Allen—guitars and synth

Sevil Sprawl—drums and percussion

When did the band form? Siriun Geometry formed on April 16, 2006.

You might like us if you like... Well, put it this way, if Tool and Radiohead had a love child, it might sound like Siriun Geometry. You'll like us if you like jazzy, progressive, variable metal.

Upcoming events... July 7 with displaceD, Static Horizon and Syndicate at Club Infinity, Williamsville. July 9 with the UNITE! Tour (Lexsis Jumps and One Win Choice) at Nicolet Skate Park in Lexington, Maryland. August 26 at Club Diablo in Buffalo.

List of recorded releases... We have a song out online called "Transcend" that everyone is loving. It's just a taste of the EP we have in the works. At our shows, beginning June 26, we'll be giving away a demo to everyone.

Anything else you would like our readers to know about the band...

We just want you to come out to our shows and have a killer time. Also, on June 26, we'll be giving away some Guitar World 2007 Buyer's Guides because we're in that mag. We've had so much love and support from friends and fans so far and, to them, we say thank you.

Contact information...

The band:

<http://www.siriungeometry.com>

The management: jolproductions@yahoo.com

BANDWIDTH: SIRIUN GEOMETRY

▶ To hear samples of the music from Left of the Dial/Bandwidth, visit www.artvoice.com