

# A picture is worth a couple of songs

or a few deceptions

by Jared Dean

## RECORD REVIEW

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the cover of an album should be worth at least a song. How else can one decide if the inside's worth investigating when the cover emits emotions alien to the content of the release.

For instance, one would expect an album depicting blood and mayhem on the cover to contain some heavy thrashing music inside. Right? Or one would suppose a group who puts pretty pictures of flowers on the cover of their release to also have music that is calm and soothing. Is any of this sinking in? Or, if a band was a Camouflage sound-alike, then you would expect the cover to depict two fresh looking young men with nice hair-cuts and willing smiles. Huh?

Looking at the cover of Cause & Effect's release An-

other Minute takes no energy and requires no thought... except maybe "Do these guy's know how to dress themselves?" But once the music is filtered through your favorite pair of speakers (preferable a 350 watt diddy), conscious thought would equal "oops, I think I accidentally put my Camouflage CD in." Or possibly "oops, I think I accidentally put my Depeche Mode in on accident."

Sure Cause & Effect has taints of the two groups mentioned, but it's not exactly a carbon copy and it's not that bad. The album moves from a tailor-made top 40 song "You Think You Know Her" to a very nicely written, less than a 130 b.p.m., song entitled "Farewell To Arms," and these are just the first two tracks. From song to song you'll be glad you didn't take them at face value or first listen.

Then there's Course of Empire to contemplate. If the picture on the front reflects what's inside, expect... Gothic. receive... more. Recorded in 1990, Carpe Diem Records has digitally edited, remastered, and re-released a musical experience for the ear as well as the mind.

Not entirely Gothic, this debut album is packed with close to 50 minutes of sample, including various styles of "earth" type music, from chanting to birds. By far the best selection on the release is a "This Mortal Coil" sounding song entitled "Dawn of the Great Eastern Sun" which was inspired by *Shambhala, the Sacred Path of the Warrior*, by Chogyam Trungpa, and has an ambient soundtrack recorded at sunrise in the Ouachita Mountains in Oklahoma on Earth Day in '90. A unique way to end a unique album.

Then there's The Wonder Stuff. The cover depicts a col-



The Wonder Stuff want to forget about Elvis.

lage of Elvis-type paraphernalia. So why is it called *never loved elvis*? Good question. Probably because the Stuff are as sick of the Elvis revival as I am.

The music involved with *never loved elvis* is more than leave Elvis six-feet under advice. It contains possibly the best music The Wonder Stuff

have ever made. Well thought out and put together, both musically and lyrically, the Stuff have enticed musicologists once again by blending basic acoustic guitar-type music with harmonicas, mandolins, fiddles, banjos, and accordions (not to mention a very impressive string quartet and intriguing percussion).



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