

# Animal Liberation tunes to furry friends' rights



Courtesy of G. Harari

German divas Nina Hagen and Lene Lovich promote animal rights on their rap song "Don't Kill the Animals," included on the "Animal Liberation" LP.

By Scott Harrah  
Senior Editor

## "Animal Liberation," various artists, Wax Trax Records

Each year, millions of animals are used in laboratory experiments for cosmetics, household products and medical research. The experiments, practiced on everything from the proverbial guinea pig to beagle puppies, have incensed animal-rights activists who claim adequate testing can be done on computers.

## Record Review

Several of Europe's new-wave and pop artists like The Colour Field, Nina Hagen, Shriekback, Lene Lovich and Captain Sensible have joined with Howard Jones on "Animal Liberation," an animal-rights LP designed to get the word out on what they consider cruel, inhumane animal treatment.

Politically, the musicians' message is questionable.

Would a halt to all lab animal experiments truly work? Would sci-

entists be able to use computers on all research? But there are, of course, moral questions. Is it ethical to perform a painful burn experiment on a puppy culled from the bargain bin of some dog pound?

Those are some of the issues lyrically discussed on "Animal Liberation."

Politics aside, the LP contains cuts from musicians we haven't heard from in some time, namely Nina Hagen and Lene Lovich, the two kooky, wonderfully absurd performance artists who make up the better half of Germany's punk royalty.

Hagen and Lovich seem unlikely candidates for a political cause. Hagen, one of the original members of the late 1970s punk movement, later went on to make off-beat dance pop peppered with her multi-octave, schizophrenic voice and flaunt her "Pebbles Flintstone as a Hamburg Whore" wardrobe. Lovich became popular in underground circles in the early 1980s with her warped vocals and Olive Oyl appearance.

Neither has released a full-length LP in years, so their rap duet, "Don't Kill the Animals," is welcome but disappointing new material.

As always, Hagen is so satirical that it's difficult to believe she's serious about animal rights. Remember, Hagen is the one who's always in fanzines talking about UFOs and her 17-year-old punker husband, Iroquois. Her lyrics mirror her absurd image, making her message seem less rhetorical than snidely ludicrous:

"Life is for living/The animals agree/If they were meant to be eaten

they'd be growing on trees/So no more torture of our furry friends/In the name of food or scientific ends."

I think schlock poet Rod McKuen would agree with you, Nina.

Hagen and Lovich rap trashy politics over and over as their wonderfully annoying voices battle it out to see which one can be more obnoxious while the beatbox whines with atonality.

Fortunately, the LP version doesn't contain the bad disco electro-beat mixed in on the 12-inch "club" version.

Lovich bounces back on the solo number "Supernature," a more cogent argument for the cause in which she does some of her best work since the "Stateless" LP.

By far, the best cuts are Shriekback's "Hanging Fire" and Colour Field's "Cruel Circus."

The problem with the album is the inculcation of vegetarian rhetoric disguised as anti-vivisection manifesto. For example, Colour Field's sentiments about the issue:

"If you could talk to the animals/ Could you justify your reasons/With the animals/Why the animals/Isn't it enough to eat them?"

In the transitions between many of the songs, recordings of cattle being slaughtered are added for melodramatic shock value.

Howard Jones, who came up with the concept of "Animal Liberation," displays the most anger, whining under a layer of keyboards: "The lives were taken for feasts at the table/A life

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Howard Jones, the creator of "Animal Liberation."

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