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Donald Duncan
Duncan Aviation Business Plan Competition

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RECORD REVIEW WITH... MARK LACE



Jeff Reiner/ Daily Nebraskan

Ciccone Youth The Whitey Album Blast Records

Is Sonic Youth the anti-Madonna? At times it would seem so.

A press release from Blast First records says that Ciccone is not only mega-pop star Madonna's last name, but also means Sonic in French! Just a cosmic coincidence, or were the members of Sonic Youth meant to form an off-shoot band with Minuteman Mike Watt and do Madonna spoofs? Sonic Youth and Ciccone Youth are the same band.

Sonic/Ciccone Youth may be the anti-Madonna, but not because of their spoofs of her "Burnin' Up" and "Into the Groove," or of Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love," either. These are the least interesting inclusions on "The Whitey Album."

These three songs, along with tracks like "Two Cool Rock Chicks Listening to NEU" and "Tuff Titty Rap," may make "The Whitey Album" seem like a joke. Well, it is partially, but there is also a great deal of worthwhile music, too.

Most of the album consists of experimental, mechanized, syncopated instrumentals, heavy on the rhythm and on weird noises, occasionally accompanied by detached, attitude-laden Kim Gordon musings on sexual politicking -- her favorite subject.

What sets Ciccone Youth apart from other experimental noise-

makers is the same thing that sets Sonic Youth apart from other guitar torturers -- structure and pop sensibility. They can arrange eerie, frightening noises into structures that make them not only listenable, but often riveting.

While "Daydream Nation," the most recent Sonic album, contains some of the best guitar songs in recent memory, "The Whitey Album" is more like a collection of great little soundtrack pieces. The best way to listen to it is to put it in your Walkman, and go for a walk. And look around at everything, no matter where you are. Downtown is the best.

Look at all the trash, dirt and slime that covers even the cleanest parts. Watch bums, wandering alcoholics and bag ladies. And "normal" people, too. It's often unsettling how perfectly the music on this record accompanies everyday scenes. For whatever reason, Sonic/Ciccone Youth has the knack of making the music of urban decay. And there's enough of it even in tiny Lincoln for this New York City inspired music to hit home.

So it's a massive understatement, despite the coincidences, to call them the anti-Madonna. They can't really be called anti or pro anything. They just see a great deal of detachment, disinterest, trash, dirt and slime, and they make music that somehow sounds like that.

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