

Pool of the Gods



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

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I could absolve myself/I thought I could free myself/ But really I denied myself."

Similar sentiments appear throughout the lyrics on "The State of the Nation." The entire album seems to be an attempt by band members to understand their roles in causing injustice and crying out against it.

The album's best songs are by seasoned veterans of the D.C. hard-core scene. Ignition, Marginal Man, Soul Side, Christ on a Crutch and Fugazi all turn in memorable songs. Members of these bands have been in D.C. bands for years, and the influence and experience shows.

Some of the lyrics are overstated, as are those of Christ on a Crutch, who try to compare racism in America to that in South Africa. More approachable are the subtle words of Soul Side or King Face, who express powerful sentiments without overbearing the listener.

There is plenty of variety in the music as well. Scream and Fidelity Jones both offer potent dub musings, the former utilizing clips of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr. and a Cheyenne chant in "America Dub."

The Billy Bragg-ish "nearly

acoustic, lone-ranter-against-the-world" style of the band "3" is well suited to close the album's first side.

Also notable is the dirge-like memorial presented by Red Emma, a song which seeks meaning in a haunting anguish. Such songs provide marked contrast to the primitive Britanarpunk of Broken Siren or the often trite words from Thorns.

The songs and words of the bands involved on this compilation, together with the twelve-page accompanying booklet, show the maturity and continued unrest of the underground music scene in America's capital.

The album represents a challenge to the listener, a challenge to examine oneself and one's country and to act upon the results of such inquiry. It also is a testament to the dedication of those who support the youth action group Positive Force and the people at Dischord Records.

"While this album is full of direct, even brutal criticism, it ultimately is meant to be a cry of love, with hope and determination overcoming the pain and anger. Its rage screams out for the renewal of life and idealism, for a new America."

- from the accompanying booklet

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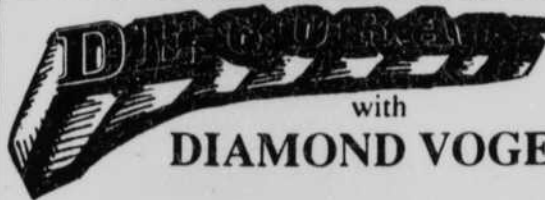
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