

Chapterhouse gives birth to swirling album



"Whirlpool"
Chapterhouse
Dedicated/
BMG/RCA
Rating: A+



Chapterhouse

Courtesy of RCA

By Michael Stock
Senior Reporter

Just when it looked like Kitchens of Distinction's "Strange Free World" was going to be the best album of 1991, Chapterhouse came along.

This band is the biggest, brightest and best baby birthed yet from the feedback-drenched "Psychocandy" world of the Jesus and Mary Chain.

Back when they were good, that is. Chapterhouse is not as sparse as Ride. More lush than... well, Lush. The band swirls a hell of a lot more than the Kitchens of Distinction, taking as much influence from the Cocteau Twins as My Bloody Valentine.

Robin Guthrie, one of the three Cocteau Twins, obviously approves. He produced two of the tracks.

"Autosleeper" offers the mesmerizing scratch of guitars, and big thumping, throbbing innuendoes of bass and percussion. Slow and pounding,

"Autosleeper" offers several orgasms worth of feedback and crashes that are probably somehow illegal in Georgia.

Robin Guthrie's re-recording of "Something More" sounds completely different from the original version

from the "Sunburst" EP — which swirled plenty. The version on "Whirlpool" is simpler and more concise, featuring that trademark ringing of guitar that only Guthrie could make.

This version of "Something More"

sounds like the group has stepped into a Cocteau Twins song and forgotten to invite Elizabeth Fraser — or maybe like a Cocteau Twins song with guest vocals.

"Breather" and "Treasure" are huge and magnificent — much bigger and

sweeter than Ride could ever be. Wispy, melodic "ooh's" rise and fall over a beautiful Kitchens of Distinction wall of ambient guitars.

Both "Falling Down" and "Pearl" are termed by the cute music press people as alternative/dance — the same, special category reserved for such pop perfections as MBV's "Soon," Curve's "Blindfold" and "Frozen" EP's and Moonshake's "First" EP.

Not a bad crowd to stand in. "Pearl" is quite simply the best single of 1991, possibly the entire decade.

A dancy, sampled loop of percussion from Led Zeppelin's "When The Levee Breaks" powers "Pearl" perfectly. Lofty back-up vocals provided by Rachael of Slowdive illuminate the perfection of it all.

There is a problem, though. All five boys in the band are terribly cute. This complicates matters. Because they're good. They're real good.

So, what's the problem? Because they're so cute, they're attracting not only serious music-types, but droves of pubescent or near-pubescent teens.

To buy the finest album in the world right now, you're probably going to have to stand behind Chapterhouse groupies waiting for this piece of perfection to come out. Girls arguing over which one they're going to marry, boys arguing over which member they're going to be.

Perfection's got too many catches.

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