

Tears For Fears' greatest hits more than 'pop fluff'



Courtesy of Mercury Records

Tears for Fears

Reviews



"Tears Roll Down: Greatest Hits 1982-1992"
Tears For Fears
Polydor Records

Now don't laugh. While most of our memories of this group consist of a fleeting top-40 phase we went through in junior high, a second glance back through Tears For Fears' impressive catalog may surprise you.

And it may soothe any insecurities you might have had about really liking "Shout."

Songwriter/driving force Roland Orzabal has lasted this long, going relatively unscathed critically, because of one concept: sincerity. He really sounds like he means everything he sings, and it's hard not to hum along with his earnestness.

Throughout the last decade, Tears

For Fears produced some of the most interesting, complex, and impassioned pop tunes around. When any of the songs from the group's 1985 mammoth bestseller "Songs from the Big Chair" pop up on the radio, they still sound remarkably fresh and tuneful for a group dismissed in '82 as pretty, fluffy synth-heads.

"Tears Roll Down" comes at a junction for the group, because bassist and No. 2 pinup boy Curt Smith has left the band to pursue other musical areas. Funny, because it doesn't seem like there is a musical territory these guys haven't charted, even marginally, throughout their career.

From the techno drone of "Mad World" through the cocktail jazz of "I Believe" to the glorious and underrated 1990 concept album, "The Seeds of Love," the band weaves through styles with the ease of very tasteful and accomplished musicians, all the while using Orzabal's gift for empathized lyrics as an anchor to give the songs some heft.

The hits are here, obviously. There'd be some whining if "Mothers Talk" was left out. But those songs that

didn't receive ample airplay through the years deserve a closer look. The quasi-feminist anthem "Woman in Chains" was one of the best things the group had ever done, a slow pulse and hushed vocal floating on a most heavenly of melodies.

Likewise, the other overlooked pop masterpiece "Advice for the Young at Heart" never charted higher than No. 50, though you'd be pressured to find another tune more suited to pubescent radio. The sole new composition, "Laid So Low," is a lyrically morbid tale of betrayed love, but the melody is so tuneful and the beat is so effortlessly relentless that it stands apart from other dance tracks.

There was, and still is, something about Tears For Fears' tunefulness that elevates Orzabal's compositions to something higher than pop fluff. Maybe the songs are just too dang mature for any tastes under the age of 20. Or 25. Whatever. As TFF heads into its second decade, keep an eye out for this rising young group. It may surprise you.

—Paul Winner

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VIBES

Metal madness revealed by Ozzy

●Metal god/animal-rights activist Ozzy Osbourne got himself into a little fracas last week when the concert he had planned in Los Angeles to raise money for his late guitarist Randy Rhodes' defaced gravestone got a little out of hand. During the final encore, Oz invited many of the fans onstage to mosh around with him and the band. Mosh they did, taking more than \$100,000 worth of music equipment to the dumpsters with them.

Ironically, the amount Ozzy lost on the destroyed instruments was the amount he had hoped to raise through ticket sales for Rhodes' tombstone. Osbourne was upset, but not surprised about the incident. Just goes to show you about the metal youth of today.

Parents — wean your young ones on Raffi or prepare for inevitable episodes like this.

●MuchMusic reports that former Monkee Micky Dolenz has assembled a collection of tasteful lullabies for a compilation of chil-

dren's songs entitled "Micky Dolenz Puts You to Sleep." Rhino records has successfully resurrected Dolenz's career with cover tunes like the Beatles' "The Fool on the Hill" and the Mamas and the Pappas' "Dream a Little Dream."

The musical community at Rhino is extremely pleased at the shift Dolenz's career has taken, and many had wondered why Micky — because his voice is so well-suited for it — didn't create children's music during his star days in the '60s.

Yeah, like "Hey, Hey, We're the Monkees" and "Listen to the Band" are classified as deep adult entertainment.

●Fantasy Records has just issued a generous helping of spoken-word albums by the late, great bastard comic Lenny Bruce, so says Pulse! magazine. Instead of focusing on the comedian's life story, as so many other compilations have wont to do, "The Sick Humor of Lenny Bruce" does a great job of showing

how pointed and meaty this guy's satire was.

Listening to the discs again after so many years, and in the wake of fellows like Howard Stern, acknowledges the shadow cast over today's comics, who follow Bruce's satirical venom with half of his feeling and spite. Who can forget classic shock treatments like "White Collar Drunks" and "How to Relax Your Minority Friends at Parties?"

A disheartening breath of dirty air in these PC times. In the timeless words of Lenny, "F—k 'em if they can't take a joke."

●On a final note, author Isaac Asimov died of complications arising from cancer last week. The science-fiction guru churned out an average of 10 books a year, even until the last stage of his life. He was renowned and revered for his prize-winning novel, "I, Robot," and for helping start the wave of sci-fi enthusiasm in the early days of television.

—Paul Winner

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Book

Continued from Page 9

Valenzuela of Buenos Aires, author of "Open Door," a collection of stories.

Also included is writing by Jan Morris (who began life as a male), author of "Pax Britannica," and Ursula K. Le Guin, author of the classic "Earthsea Trilogy," whose long poetic essay, "The Writer on, and at, Her Work," offers an interesting glimpse into her own inner writer's life.

Many of the essays offer insight, and it is this inner field where today's writer fights her most serious battles.

Although the collection is fascinating, and the various writers seem to be interesting people, many of the essays are overwritten. Much of the language used is flowery "literary" language.

Too many of the writers sound too much like each other, which may indicate there is a good deal of reading and writing going on between them, or merely that they have attended one too many workshops on creative writing.

It's not a book to be read from cover to cover, but one well worth

browsing through on a spring afternoon.

And while some of the writers included will be familiar names, many others may be new to the reader, opening up new literary experiences. For this reason alone it's a book well worth looking into.

Women writers, at least in our culture, never will go back to being second-class literary figures. The effect of the recent explosion in women's writing will continue to be felt for centuries to come.

A collection such as this one may well be an exciting document on the early decades of the new literary millennium.

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