

The next big thing in pop music

Smiles & nitroglycerine: the power of Powder

Reviewed by The G-Man
Immedia Wire Service

POWDER
Sonic Machine
Powder Records

You can surrender to the pulsation, the propulsion and the power of Powder, or you can get the hell out of the way. There doesn't seem to be any middle ground. The songs are too pretty, the rhythms are too explosive, and the lyrics are too trippy for any sort of middle-ground reaction.

Saying *Sonic Machine* stands as one of the most impressive debut albums in the history of modern music (as I do) may actually turn out to be an understatement. The fact is, Powder has delivered on the fantastic promise of their incendiary live show.

After an eerie 30-second intro, they whoosh into the title tune with all the pent-up fury of jungle ani-

mals in heat. With nary a pause for breath, they slam-bam you with "Up Here" and "Seat of My Pants," completing a 1-2-3 punch so full of smiles and nitroglycerine that you'll be gasping for breath.

The Holy Grail

And then comes something that producers, songwriters and engineers lust after: a can't miss, bona fide, genuine, no-holds-barred Hit. "Losing You" will bust through the payola barrier of radio. It will be licensed globally. It will be on movie soundtracks. You will hear this song whether you purchase this album or not. It is a magnificent piece of aural history, perfectly encapsulating everything that can go right when singer, band, writer, producer and studio meet in glory.

Three tracks later, they do it again with "Monger."

Which is not to say that the sing-along splendor of "Need A Little Help" and the shout-along

festivities of "Go" aren't wonderful. But hey, a hit is a hit.

Sandwiched in there somewhere is a cover of Led Zep's "What Is And What Should Never Be," lovingly redesigned to Powder perfection, yet somehow retaining all that made it a gas in the first place. The album concludes with the good-timey "Red" and the buzz-in-your-brain zippiness of "Fly On The Wall."

A good album? *Sonic Machine* is so far beyond good that you need a dictionary of adjectives. Ninette's lead vocals are laser-beam intense, yet curiously playful. Phil X's guitar work is wicked and wild. J-Bo Dynamite is a drummer of incredible energy and taste. And Allan Hearn's bass lines seem to tap into the primal heartbeat of the soul.

Indicting the Record Industry

Powder stands to be the recording industry's most blatant example of oversight. Here is a band that incorporates the whole package: songcraft, image, chops, merchandise, studio excellence, and live presentation. Plunk them down in Japan and watch as they sell a mil-

lion CDs and 20,000 t-shirts.

So why aren't they signed? Because record company personnel fall into two categories: namby-pamby mama's boys who can't make a decision without a committee; or chicken***t a**hole greed-heads who offer contracts that virtually steal the publishing rights of artists and attempt to lock them into restrictive, long-term contracts that make lawyers rich.

You'll Like 'Em If...

If you like the soundscapes of Garbage, but want more musical excitement... if you like the pop punch of No Doubt, but want more rock... if you like the crunch 'n' power of Rob Zombie, but want genuine hum-all-day-long songs... if you like aural precision and dance-friendly tunes, but also want the vibe of real people playing real instruments... If some or all of that, then Powder is for you. Contact: Powder Records, 1215 N. Olive Dr., Ste. 407, W. Hollywood, CA 90069. www.powdermusic.com.



G-Man writes songs and commercials in Los Angeles. Some of his tunes are found at: www.MP3.com/THE_G-MAN.