



BOB CAREY / Los Angeles Times

Natalie Merchant delivers a steamy performance in her first L.A. show since splitting from 10,000 Maniacs.

Pop Music

L A Times 11/20/95

Merchant Radiates Energy at Wiltern

By STEVE HOCHMAN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

The strangest thing happened about half an hour into Natalie Merchant's concert at the Wiltern Theatre on Friday. It was like a jolt of caffeine shot through the house—you could practically smell it, as if everyone had stopped at Starbucks on the way.

The audience got on its feet, the band boosted its dynamics and, most important, Merchant got a surge of energy and strutted around the stage like a Mizrahi model. What had thus far been a rather tepid show suddenly transformed into a robust brew of pop-folk-poetics.

Merchant is, in fact, a perfect Starbucks kind of pop artist—with an air of sophistication, but in a mass-marketable form, a la Sting. (Merchant was actually drinking what appeared to be herbal tea to sooth a flu-ravaged throat.)

Unlike Sting, Merchant hasn't used her break from the band with which she became a star as an

opportunity to flaunt sophistication. No pseudo-highbrow jazz antics for her in either the recent solo debut album "Tigerlily" or in this first of two nights at the Wiltern—her first L.A. shows since splitting from 10,000 Maniacs.

Merchant's ivory exterior remains something of a barrier—though to fans it's mystique—and the poetry of her new songs is no less mannered than much of the Maniacs' material. But the enriched support of her new band, tasty but with a few attractively rough edges, justifies the solo move. Guitarist Jennifer Turner particularly stood out—her showcase on "I May Know the Word" sounded like some great lost David Gilmour excursion. And the three Maniacs songs done Friday were livened up with percolating quasi-world-music rhythms, which on "These Are the Days" prompted Merchant to let her hair fly loose as she danced around the stage.

She really let her hair down, metaphorically speaking, in an extended encore segment. Losing all

traces of aloofness, she started with an unlikely but credible version of the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" and followed with songs associated with Joni Mitchell, Aretha Franklin and Irma Thomas—three notably spunky role models.

Even more unguarded, she punctuated the closing run with an impromptu (and failed) attempt at Kansas' "Dust in the Wind" and a story about a recent dream about Eddie Vedder trying to kill her. If she's this feisty, Vedder wouldn't stand a chance.

The opening set by Pennsylvania band the Innocence Mission also included a Joni Mitchell song, in this case "Both Sides Now"—the anthem of sensitive young female singer-songwriters. In the bird-call voice and unassuming manner of front-person Karen Peris, the song seemed about naivete retained rather than lost, anchoring a charming and sneakily accomplished poetic aesthetic that's still untainted by cynicism.

LA weekly 11/95

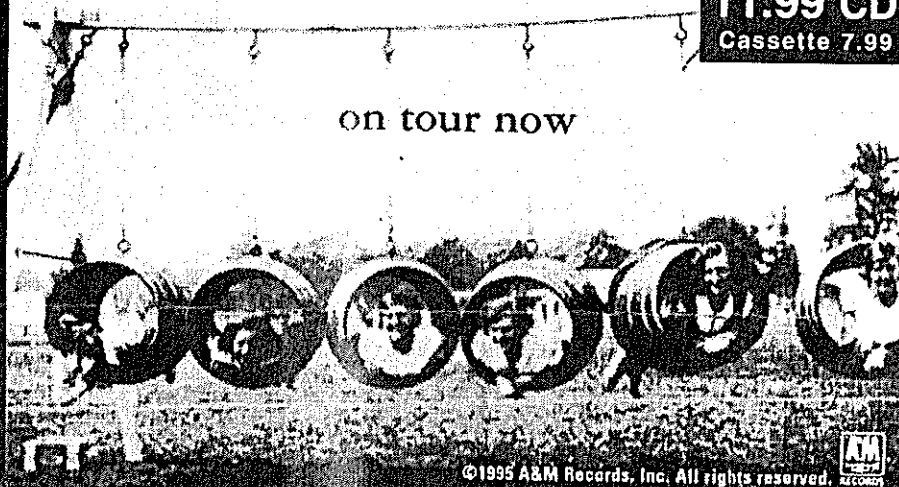
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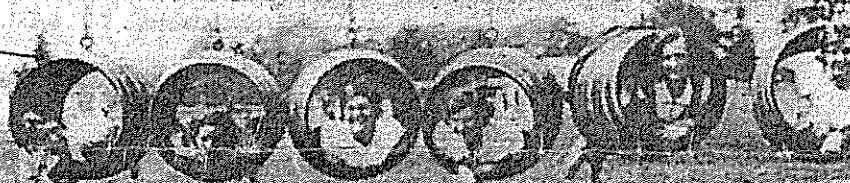
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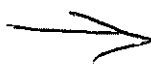
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LA weekly 11/95

Music

Faith, curiosity and chiming guitar: The music of the Innocence Mission

There's at least one place that Don Peris, guitarist for the Innocence Mission, would like to visit that won't be on his band's current American tour itinerary.

Peris would like to spend some time in Medjugorje, a village in Yugoslavia where six children said they saw the Virgin Mary in 1981 while they were tending sheep on nearby hills.

"It's an amazing thing," says Peris of events in the village, which became a religious shrine visited by tens of thousands in the years following the reported apparition. "At some point, I might go over there. I've always been fascinated by Fatima and Lourdes and Guadalupe, those visitations. Growing up in the Catholic Church and Catholic schools, those things have always fascinated me."

"I just believe it can happen. The fact that it's happening in this day and age, in this century, when things seem so far removed from anything like that... When any sort of miraculous happening occurs now, I think people are very skeptical. But at one point, I don't know if they would have been."

Peris' interest in Medjugorje is shared by his wife, Karen, vocalist, lyricist and keyboard player for the Innocence Mission. On the band's new album, "The Innocence Mission," there is in fact a song titled "Medjugorje," a short piece that contains the lines "Mother Mary, Mother/Filling up this place/ With hope and peace."

"That song was primarily inspired by the appearance of the Blessed Mother to those children," says Peris. "Karen's grandmother was really devoted to the Blessed Mother, and the day Karen and I

The insider

By Tom Popson

were writing the music to that song, Karen's mother came to the door to say that her grandmother had died. So Karen just finished the song and dedicated it to her grandmother."

Married almost four years, Don and Karen Peris grew up in Lancaster, Pa., and attended Lancaster Catholic High, which is where the Innocence Mission came together in 1982 with the addition of bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown.

A town of some 59,000 residents, Lancaster is still surrounded by a lot of open country, says Peris—although he adds that there has been a good deal of building activity there in recent years. Anyone who has heard the Innocence Mission's music—airy, chiming-guitar, folk-tinged songs ranging from quiet reveries to midium rockers—might naturally wonder if the open environs of Lancaster had anything to do with the open feel of the band's music.

"I don't know," muses Peris. "It is very quiet where we live and rehearse. We live on the outskirts of the city, and we rehearse in a studio in a barn out in the country that's completely surrounded by cornfields. The barn is owned by an older lady who made it a studio a long time ago for the local TV station, which has since moved out. She's really cool. She rents it to us for next to nothing."

Like many other bands, the Innocence Mission—which appears Friday at Cabaret Metro—began its career playing



Innocence Mission (from left): Steve Brown, Karen Peris, Don Peris and Mike Bitts.

Who: The Innocence Mission, the Pedal-jets

Where: Cabaret Metro, 3730 N. Clark St., 549-0203

When: 11 p.m. Friday

How much: \$6 (21-and-over show)

cover versions of other performers' songs.

The band went dormant after Don and Karen Peris and Mike Bitts entered college. But eventually the lure of performing became too strong, everyone bailed out of school, and in 1986 a revived Innocence Mission—still based in Lancaster, as it is today—began playing original material in nearby Philadelphia.

One of the places the quiet-spoken Peris

and his band were booked into was a biker bar, which seems, to say the least, a little inappropriate.

"A lot of times, we had no idea what the places were like when we got the bookings," says Peris. "But we always went through with it and played. It ended up being a really good night. Earlier that week, we had played at a lot of churches—youth sings in church basements. It was quite a contrast."

Eventually signed by A&M Records, the band spent eight months, off and on, recording its debut album. Since its release, Karen's singing—supple, strong and capable of a notable purity on high notes—has been likened several times to that of Kate Bush, while the unusual phrasing she

See *Innocence*, page R

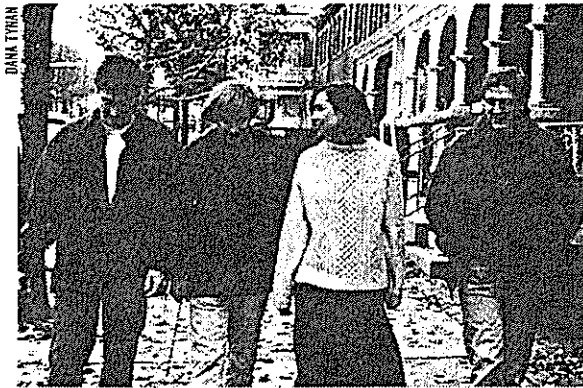
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By Chris Heim

K/A

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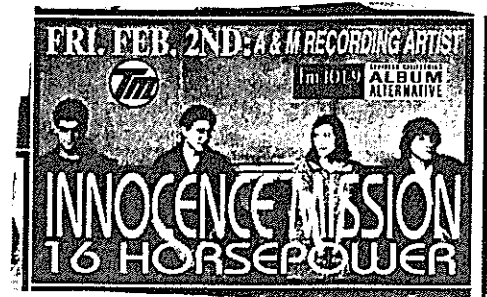
Innocence Mission, Sixteen Horsepower Troubadour, February 2nd

THE EVER-FLUCTUATING SONIC BAROMETER OF Music That's Cool is rapidly switching from harsh/atonal to grass-roots-y these days (thank you, God...), as exemplified by this double bill. Of the two, Sixteen Horsepower are the more interesting and original, replete with inventively skewed rock guitars and country twang, but in tune with darkness and irony (remember Wall of Voodoo's version of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire"?). Sixteen Horsepower's tales of the heartland are gloomy and eloquent, like a Western with a sad ending. David Eugene Edwards has a properly angst-filled yowl, which serves to solidify the band's tour of American music, from Appalachian to blues to Tex-Mex.

Headliners Innocence Mission are of the ethereal, flowered dresses-and-sensitive thoughts quirky/folky school. It's nothing that hasn't been done before by the Story, Natalie Merchant, and numerous others. Still, Karen Peris has a sweet, expressive voice that blends well with the band's spare, languid musicianship. Just don't expect to mosh. ★

—Daina Darzin

ENTERTAINMENT



The Innocence Mission
Glow
featuring
"Bright As Yellow"
and
"Keeping Awake"

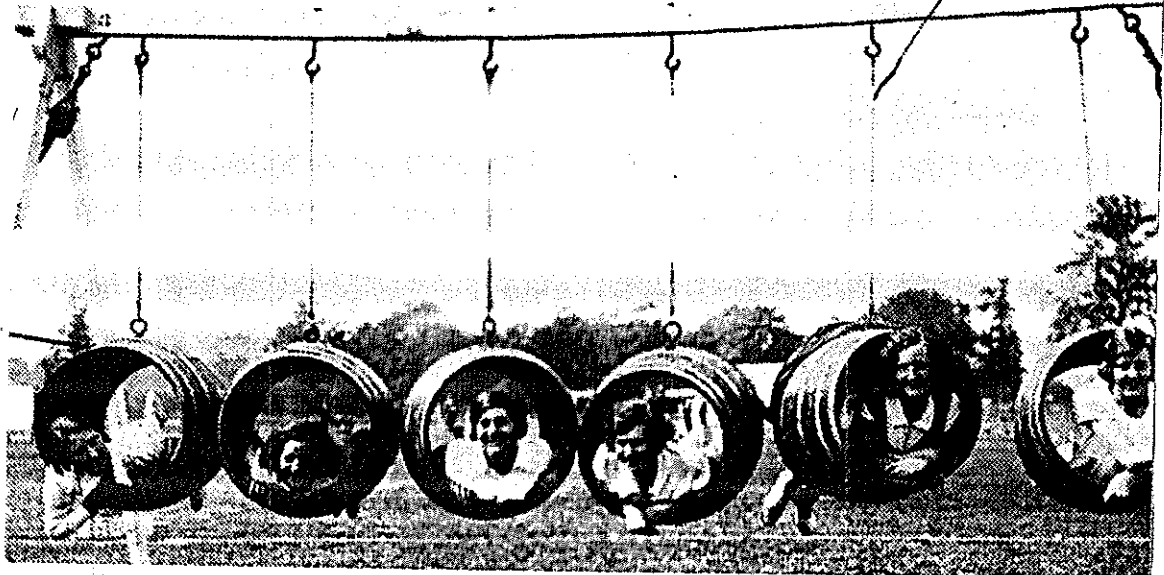
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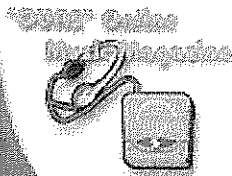
The Innocence Mission
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the innocence mission glow





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[...the short version...]

The Innocence Mission have once again concocted a palette full of memorable swirling melodies that evoke time, place, and spirit. On their fourth album, both traditional and electrified folk preside over the Victorian rock of their past. A definite purchase for aficionados of Neil Young, John Denver (they cover "Follow Me"), Joni Mitchell, and Paul Simon.

[...the long version...]

After a four-year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel, and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, "Birds Of My Neighborhood." Lead singer Karen Peris says, "We've been so affected by their music. I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much."

Although this album is traditional in its folk style, many of the songs arrangements carry electric guitar, organ, piano, bass, and tambourine with a splatter of drums. This is a somewhat departure from the Victorian rock of their past, which includes three albums produced by Larry Klein and Dennis Herring on A&M Records.

The Innocence Mission have ultimately taken over where they left off since the release of "Glow," the band's third album, which boasted a top 20 AAA hit "Bright As Yellow." The last song on Glow, "I Hear You Say So," was not only a fan favorite, but a predecessor to what you'll hear on "Birds Of My Neighborhood": a palette full of memorable swirling melodies that evoke time, place, and spirit.

Karen says, "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible, the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of being alive, and to say how hope illuminates the darker days." For nearly 20 years, it's this kind of music the Innocence Mission has been making ... music that touches the heart of the soul and the mind. Yes, indeed. The birds have finally returned

Innocence Mission

"Birds Of My Neighborhood"

© 1999 *Kneeling Elephant* Rec.

1. Where Does The Time Go?
2. Snow
3. Follow Me
4. The Lakes of Canada
5. You Are The Light
6. Birdless
7. I Haven't Seen This Day Before
8. She May Turn Around
9. I Was In The Air
10. July
11. Going Away
12. Green Grass, Red Tree

Genre: Folk-rock

home, and so have the Innocence Mission.

— *by Keith Abbott, Guest writer*

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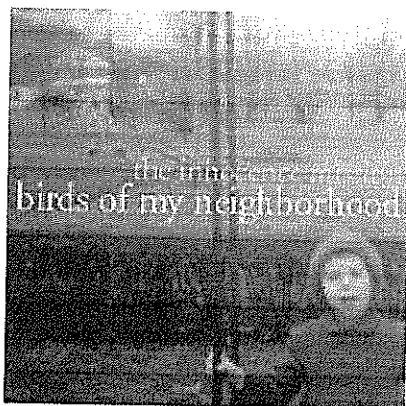
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Mood Swings

Reviews written by Mood Swings Readers

The Innocence Mission - Birds of My Neighborhood

The Innocence Mission
Birds of My Neighborhood
Kneeling Elephant Records



After a four year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, Birds of My Neighborhood. Lead singer, Karen Peris says, "We've been so affected by their music. I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much."

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Karen says "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible the joyful and

James says, "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is indescribable, the joy and sorrowful mysteries of being alive, and to say how hope illuminates the darker days." For nearly 20 years, it's this kind of music The Innocence Mission has been making...music that touches the heart of the soul and the mind. Yes, indeed. The birds have finally returned home, and so have the Innocence Mission.

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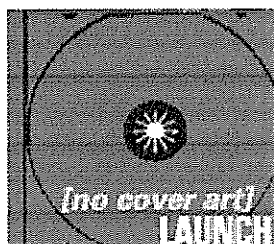
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Birds Of My Neighborhood *

The Innocence Mission
RCA Records (1999)

1 members have rated this album
4 is the average community rating

ALBUM REVIEW

It should be said from the outset that lea Karen Peris's voice is an acquired taste. childlike quality will either enthrall you or get on your nerves. But it is well suited to restrained, tranquil vibe that the innocent mission (that's right, no capitals, folks) has on for the past 13 years.

Unashamedly evoking the folk-pop tradition early Joni Mitchell and Simon & Garfunkel spare acoustic instrumentation, the band increasingly introspective ditties. Unfortunately Peris relies too heavily on clichéd motifs and birds throughout the album to convey emotional resonance. But the melodies are pleasant and there is a loving cover of Jc Denver's "Follow Me" that offers an album highlight. So if you love to kick back with Loeb and the Sundays, this could be you of the year.

This review was written by Tim_Sheridan who gave it a rating of 4 out of 7.

***Check out eBay™ for groovy goods collectibles from innocence mission, Mitchell, Simon & Garfunkel, John Denver, Lisa Loeb, and Sundays.**

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TOOTH & NAIL

August 1999

doubledrive - *1000 yard stare*

Hangar - *Last Time*

The Innocence Mission - *Birds of my neighbourhood*

Mistiggo Varggoth Darkestra - *The Key to the Gates of Apocalypse*

Mortician - *Chainsaw Dismemberment*

Mr Bungle - *California*

Slipknot

Storm without warning - *Evolve*

Stretcher

3rd Window - *Tell me why*

Uncle Tom

Uriah Heep - *Sonic Origami*

doubledrive - *1000 Yard Stare* (NCA)

Within the 12 songs on their major label debut, doubleDrive embodies all the great qualities of rock music in the late 90s - incredible vocals, powerful lyrics, and plenty of hard driving rock, not to mention handsome rock star mugs. Formerly known as MK ULTRA, doubleDrive hails from Orlando, Florida and will soon hit the road with Skunk Anansie. Hints of Black Sabbath, punk angst, 80s power metal and alternative rock coolness combines with the classic vocals of Donnie Hamby to lay the groundwork for a long and accomplished run in music. "Belief System" kicks off *1000Yard Stare* on a heavy blues grunge mood and features Hamby's deep baritone vocal style reminiscent of Chris Cornell. "Dressed in Light" kicks the listener in the head with a barrage of lightning fast riffs from guitarist Troy McLawhorn and Hamby's rhythmic arena rock sing along. The album's title track rumbles along and wallows merrily in a bass heavy groove carried by tribal sounding drums by Mike Froedge and soulful throaty vocals. "Hell" opens on some poignant acoustic guitar picking and slowly builds up to the chorus of "Thank you for coming here to get me out as fast as you can." If "Hell" is perhaps the prettiest song on *1000Yard Stare*, then "Smaller" kicks its ass with its speed-metal drumming-meets-Alice in Chains guitar grind and subtle wailing guitar. "Smaller" closes on an all-out blues thrash and ends suddenly to the mournful and eerie strains of "Vamp," a seductively creepy song punctuated by a melodic bass line and swooping, distorted guitar riffs. Just when "Vamp" lulls in the listener, "Sacrifice" screeches in with funky distorted guitar work and one of the year's best alternative rock guitar solos. The funky distortion gives way to a fuzzy, guitar sludge on "Gone." "Tattooed Bruise" and "Reason" keep up the impressive vocals and masterful guitar work, but it is the wallop of the album-closing "Standby" that is the true gem of doubleDrive's *1000 Yard Stare*. - **Carl Cunningham**

Contact: (web)

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Hangar - *Last Time* (Hangar Music)

Hangar is a Brazilian new power metal act formed in 1997 by Aquiles Priester (drummer) and Cristiano Wortmann (guitarist). Later on, vocalist Michael Polchowicz was invited to join the band and bassist Luis Fernando Melo joined after the recording of *Last Time*. Influenced by old school German metal, Hangar's sound brings to mind the likes of Stratovarios and Helloween which means speed and skilled musicians. Good refrains, technical and pounding drum beats, fine guitar solos, plus a fantastic sound production and art work - but the singer is pushing his vocal chords too much to the limit. Sometimes I thought he was going out of tune but he just applied the wrong technique trying to show the best that he could on his first studio experience. Best track is "Angel of the stereo" and I'm looking forward to hearing from them really soon but with a flatter vocal sound. Finding the balance of things is not easy, specially for the younger ones, but nothing is better than the adventures of the first labor to get the equilibrium for the second. - **Guilherme Jr** (editor of AORSters)

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The Innocence Mission - *Birds of My Neighborhood* (Knitting Elephant)

After a four-year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, *Birds of My Neighborhood*. Although this album is traditional in its folk style, many of the song arrangements carry electric guitar, organ, piano, bass and tambourine with a splatter of drums. This is a somewhat departure from the Victorian rock of their past, which includes three albums produced by Larry

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Mistigoi Varggoth Darkestra - The Key to the Gates of Apocalypse (The End)

It's a mixture of dark, black and ambience project of Kniaz Varggoth (also of Nokturnal Mortum). Just one song on the album - but with a running time of 72 minutes! And let me tell you it's a killer epic CD! Truly masterful atmospheres produced by astonishing ambient sounds, synth effects and keyboards that took me through a range of obscure emotions and despair, with a tiny Bathory ghost presence and influence. Beautiful! The first 13 minutes are not easy to digest due to a lot of insane and complex songs tied together, but after that you get what you want: metal and vicious ambience. Also good are the mid-tempo songs which dominate the effort. - **Guilherme Jr** (editor of "AORsters")

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Mortician - Chainsaw Dismemberment (Relapse Records)

Let me ask you one thing: do you have the balls to listen to this? If you do, then go ahead because those guys have been brutalizing the world of extreme metal since 1990 when they released the *Brutally Mutilated 7"* and once again they've delivered a piece of sonic brutal gore-grind death. Easy to find sick vocals, grinding guitars, crushing skulls drums and bass on a short circuit and a heavier (tiny doom passages) oriented songs added to their traditional sound, plus the use of intelligent horror movies samples which are the interludes between the 28 tracks found on the infected album. Check some track titles: "Stab", "Mass mutilation", "Mauled beyond recognition", "Splattered" and more stuff sure to make you have sweet dreams - **Guilherme Jr** (editor of AORsters)

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Mr. Bungle - California (Warner Bros.)

After listening to Mr. Bungle's latest, *California*, anyone will be convinced that the group is insane. Challenging the music industry by releasing an album containing non-repetitive melodies, vocals that sound like a broken machine and dark reproductions of The Nutcracker, the group offers an album that is hardly Top 10 material. The avant-garde, five-member group with vocalist Mike Patton (formerly of Faith No More) take a different approach presenting itself to their fans with *California*. Much as Helmet's 1995 release, *Betty*, *California* appears as a cheap \$1.99 clearance buy at your local music store by its bland, plain cover. What awaits inside is absolutely one of 1999's best albums.

Mixing lounge and easy listening with techno-polka to heavy metal, *California* is the most anticipated avant-garde album in years. "Ars Moriendi" sets the signature sound of Bungle's unmatched silliness. *California* shows a different side of Mr. Bungle. This time it is a more lounge-type mood with a side of surf-guitar rock. Listening to its chaotic tracks may make you wonder, "These guys are insane; how are they going to pull this off live?" - **Alfred L Smith**

Contact: (web)

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Slipknot - Roadrunner

There is no question that the face of heavy music has changed. Metal 'zines once adorned with photos of Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue, and Guns n' Roses have now been replaced with images of Marilyn Manson, Korn, and Rob Zombie. The torch has been handed down to the next generation of headbangers, and as with all other generations, there were bound to be some changes. Slipknot is simply one of them.



Lilith Fair Artists

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Innocence Mission

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PAST LILITH EXPERIENCES

AUDIO

Click to hear clips from Innocence Mission's songs

Coming Soon!

Thirteen years after recording their debut, The Innocence Mission remains an island of calm, a beacon of hope in a post-Littleton world. From the quiet city of Lancaster PA, the three members of The Innocence Mission make their music, all of it exalting love and friendship, peace and joy. Now, group founders and songwriters Don and Karen Peris (guitarist/vocalist and singer/guitarist/pianist respectively), along with bassist Mike Bitts, have hand-crafted their fourth album, *Birds Of My Neighborhood*, an astonishing flight of fancy that speaks to the better angels in us all.

In many ways *Birds Of My Neighborhood* marks a major transition in the life of the group, and especially in the lives of Karen and Don. The songs were written and recorded during the last years of an agonizing period of childlessness, while the couple longed to start a family, and then as Karen was pregnant with their son. Throughout, the album conveys the conflicting emotions of longing, sorrow, anticipation, and boundless happiness. "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible, the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of being alive," Karen says. "And to say how hope illuminates the darker days."

Musically, the songs on *Birds Of My Neighborhood* reflect the main influences on Don and Karen, including Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon and Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins, and other pioneers of 60's folk rock. "We've been so affected by their music," notes Karen, who wrote most of the album's twelve tracks. "I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much." Adds Don, "As time goes by, we find ourselves mostly listening to the records we first heard when we were growing up. We've carried records like Neil Young's *After The Gold Rush*, Simon and Garfunkel's *Greatest Hits*, and Judy Collins' *Colours* with us through the years. The sounds of these records are pure, and because of this the songs are so deeply felt. I turn to these records time and again, not only for the songs but also as something to strive for in recording and mixing."

Birds Of My Neighborhood, the group's new album on Kneeling Elephant/RCA Records, kicks off with "Where Does The Time Go?," a spirited song of expectation. "Snow" was composed by Karen on the bass guitar, its hushed tones evoking a still, wintry landscape. "It's about being made clean like the snow," says Karen, "about carrying sorrows out of the house and burying them in the snow." The Innocence Mission has never included a cover tune on any album before, but here they turn in a lovely rendition of John Denver's "Follow Me," recorded initially as part of a tribute to the late balladeer. The upbeat "The Lakes of Canada" is about, in part, "moments of sudden joy, and how they glimmer the way fish do in a lake," says Karen. "Sometimes they are hard to keep in sight."

"You Are The Light" was written "out of admiration and love for a gentle-natured friend who was going through a time of anxiety," says Karen. The prayerful "Birdless" contrasts with the sunny "I Haven't Seen This Day Before," which features a guitar rhythm modeled on the playing of Bob Dylan and Paul Simon. The



album is named for the birds that appear in this song. Karen explains, "Mourning doves have come to our second story roof, and to the roof of the house I grew up in, every day in memory. I've always been moved to hear them singing, and sometimes I've felt a sort of companionship from them." "She May Turn Around" was inspired by Eudora Welty's classic novel *Delta Wedding*, while "I Was In The Air" reflects the band's love of hymns. Closing the album is Don's "Green Grass, Red Tree," which resembles Native American poetry. "I like to write about the simple things I see every day," says Don. The same could be said of Karen, who is gifted at finding magic in the commonplace. Her voice has the delicate clarity of spun glass, and the emotion in her songwriting has touched fans and critics everywhere. All three band members hail from Lancaster, near the Amish country of southern Pennsylvania. They met in high school, and quickly began making music together. Though the band missed the 60's, they could be considered honorary baby boomers because of their love of 60's music. Of course, they also developed a passion for contemporary music, from Talk Talk's *Laughing Stock* album to the Rachel's Music for Egon Schiele.

In 1987 The Innocence Mission signed with A&M Records. Between 1989 and 1995 the band released three acclaimed albums, a 1989 self-titled debut, *Umbrella* (1991), and *Glow* (1995) which garnered their greatest critical and commercial success to date. The *Village Voice* claimed "Glow's subtle attractions prove as memorable as a perfect summer dusk," while *Interview* praised Karen's "pristine melodies, poetic verse, and lulling voice." The album boasted a top 20 AAA hit with "Bright As Yellow," and tracks were featured on *Party of Five*, and the soundtrack to the feature film *Empire Records*. In addition, Don and Karen enjoyed some memorable turns as guest musicians over the years, having worked with such artists as Joni Mitchell, Natalie Merchant and John Hiatt. After the release of *Glow* the band toured with Natalie Merchant, Emmylou Harris, the Catchers, 16 Horsepower, and others throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The Innocence Mission returned home in the spring of 1996, and that summer began to make recordings of new songs, working at the Keppel Building, a retired candy factory in downtown Lancaster, and at home. "Most of the songs were recorded soon after they were written, something that working at home made possible," says Don. "For us this was a great way to work since songs are often most felt when they're new. We recorded all around the house, in the attic, the dining room, and in the basement among drying laundry, and between cycles of the furnace." Now it's time for *Birds Of My Neighborhood* to take wing.

For more information, visit Innocence Mission's official sites:
Kneeling Elephant Records
A&M Records: Innocence Mission

Other fan sites:


- Innocence Mission

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CD REVIEWS

THE CD	THE STORY
<p>INNOCENCE MISSION birds of my neighborhood <i>kneeling elephant records</i></p>	<p>After a four year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, <i>Birds of My Neighborhood</i>. Lead singer, Karen Peris says, "We've been so affected by their music, I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much." Although this album is traditional in its folk style, many of the songs arrangements carry electric guitar, organ, piano, bass and tambourine with a splatter of drums. This is a somewhat departure from the Victorian rock of their past, which includes three albums produced by Larry Klein and Dennis Herring on A&M Records. The Innocence Mission have ultimately taken over where they left off since the release of <i>Glow</i>, the band's third album, which boasted a top 20 AAA hit "Bright as Yellow". The last song on <i>Glow</i>, "I Hear You Say So," was not only a fan favorite, but a predecessor to what you'll hear on <i>Birds of My Neighborhood</i>: a palette full of memorable swirling melodies that evoke time, place and spirit. Karen says, "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible, the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of being alive, and to say how hope illuminates the darker days." For nearly 20 years, it's this kind of music The Innocence Mission has been making...music that touches the heart of the soul and the mind. Yes, indeed, The birds have finally returned home, and so have the Innocence Mission.</p> <p align="right">-=[reith abbott]=-</p>
 <p>SHAMELESS shameless ii <i>shameless records</i></p>	<p>Hailing from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Shameless is one of those rare Canadian acts that aren't following today's trends. "Shameless II" sounds like a more pop-ish <i>Harem Scarem</i>, and I dare say that vocalist Shawn Birt has more range and style than Scarem's Harry Hess! The disc, kicking off with the feel good rocker "Count The Ways," is a perfect example of a record that was meant to stay stuck in your CD player. Each of the four tracks on this EP (our review copy featured three bonus tracks in addition to the four listed) compliments each other and the hooks and melodies are far too catchy to forget. Once they're in your head, just try and get them out! The next three songs, "You'll Show Them," "Flowers For The Princess," and "Better Out Of Reach" are so expertly written and produced it makes you wonder why these guys aren't already as popular as Harem Scarem. With the three bonus songs ("Stealing Candy," "Merciful," and "Emotion Over Feel") this seven track EP combined with their first 3 song release would make an instant classic. (Hint! Hint!) Hearing a badly produced CD can really hurt your ears and you can tell the production on <i>Shameless II</i> is a little on the poor side. But</p>
	<p>minute or so, you can't tell the difference between <i>Shameless II</i></p>

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The Innocence Mission

Birds of My Neighborhood

Kneeling Elephant / RCA

It has been far, far too long since there has been a new record from Pennsylvania's The Innocence Mission, but that's about to change. Due to release in early August their new disc, *Birds of My Neighborhood*, may be their strongest yet. With the band pared down to a trio, they no longer have any drums or percussion in the line up, the new disc has an uncommonly warm and intimate feel. Continuing through the progression from electric atmospherics to acoustic warmth which can easily be tracked from their self titled debut through *Umbrella and Glow*, *Birds É* is a very nearly purely acoustic based disc with lead guitar man Don Peris putting away the signature tones of his vintage Gretsch in favor of a simpler approach, with accomplished bass man Mike Bitts performing dominantly on an acoustic upright and lead vocalist Karen Peris contributing some simple piano parts plus some secondary guitar and bass.

As with any Innocence Mission project the true star here is the stellar writing and exceptional vocals of Karen Peris. Peris is the poet- laureate of the everyday, somehow able to find a true sense of wonder and art in the commonplace. The prime example of this is found in the album's first single, "The Lakes of Canada":

"Look for me another day.
I feel that I could change,
I feel that I could change.
There's a sudden joy that's like
a fish, a moving light;
I thought I saw it
rowing on the lakes of Canada

Oh laughing man, what have you won?
Don't tell me what cannot be done.
My little mouth, my winter lungs,
don't tell me what can't be done.
Walking in the circle of a flashlight
someone starts to sing, to join in.

Talk of loneliness in quiet voices.
I am shy but you can reach me.
Rowing on the lakes of Canada,
rowing on the lakes of Canada."

Also weaving it's way into the mix are several subtle allusions to the band's Christian faith in tracks such as "You Are the Light" and "Birdless". Peris' voice has a sense of childlike wonder throughout that matches the music perfectly and at times calls to mind the work of Julie Miller, Natalie Merchant and Victoria Williams.

The perfect mix of art and intimacy, Birds of My Neighborhood is an unqualified triumph for The Innocence Mission. An exceptional record.

-Todd Brown

(Coming Soon)

around to seeing "The Blair Witch Project", which I'm tired of hearing about and have decided I must form my own opinion...

July 25, 1999

The new album from The Innocence Mission reviewed!

Keith Abbott was kind enough to send us this review of the new album from the Innocence Mission, which should be available in the next few weeks.

The Innocence Mission

Birds of My Neighborhood

Kneeling Elephant Records

After a four year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, *Birds of My Neighborhood*. Lead singer, Karen Peris says, "We've been so affected by their music. I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much."

Although this album is traditional in its folk style, many of the songs arrangements carry electric guitar, organ, piano, bass and tambourine with a splatter of drums. This is a somewhat departure from the Victorian rock of their past, which includes three albums produced by Larry Klein and Dennis Herring on A&M Records.

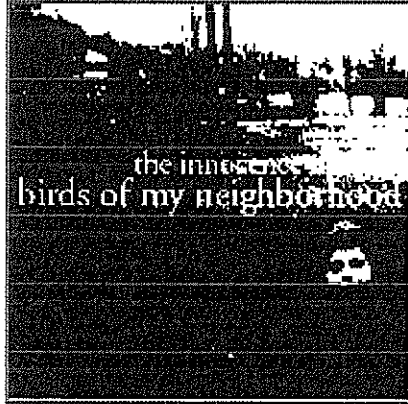
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Karen says, "Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible, the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of being alive, and to say how hope illuminates the darker days." For nearly 20 years, it's this kind of music The Innocence Mission has been making...music that touches the heart of the soul and the mind. Yes, indeed. The birds have finally returned home, and so have the Innocence Mission.

©1999 by Keith Abbott, Abbott Promotions

The Innocence Mission, **Birds of My Neighborhood** (Kneeling Elephant Records, 1999)

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[by Keith Abbott]

Buy **Birds of My Neighborhood** at CDNow.

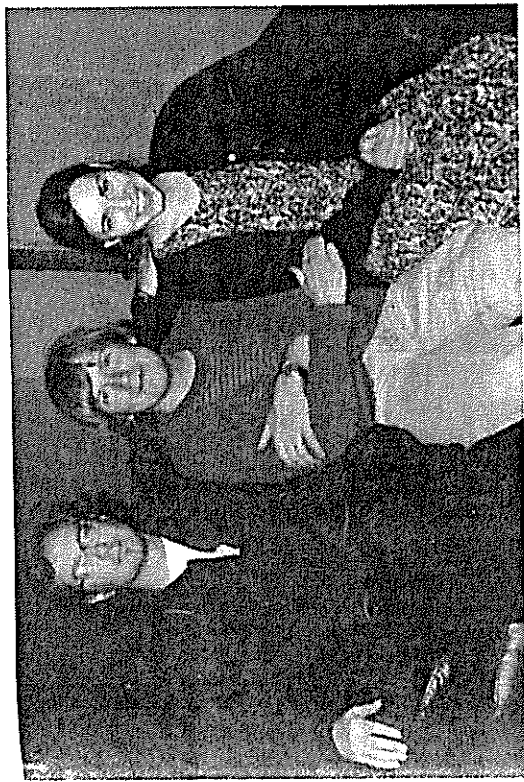


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Picture Of Innocence. A&M Records act the Innocence Mission has been at Bad Animals in Seattle working on its upcoming release for the label. Dennis Herring is producing the sessions on Studio A's API console, with engineer Chris Fuhrman and assistant John Burton. Shown, from left, are Herring and Innocence Mission members Don Peris and Karen Peris.

RCA's Ron Fair Divides Time Between Signing Up Acts and Producing Them

■ BY PAUL VERNA

NEW YORK—Producer/A&R veteran Ron Fair is the first to admit his résumé "doesn't make sense." That is, until one considers that the common denominator in acts as diverse as Armored Saint, the O'Jays, and Big Mountain is a good song. "To me, and to the artists that I work with, I'm coming from a 'song'

lacked, according to Fair, was "a couple of strong hits on it."

Enter singers Oleta Adams and Brenda Russell. Though the two artists had not recorded together before, Adams had her breakthrough hit in 1990 with the Russell-penned "Get Here." Their collaboration for "Corrina" is a new track called "We Will Find A Way," written specifically for the film and heard during

Burnishing The Who's Maximum Soundman Astley Puts A Shine On Bc

■ BY BEN CROMER

Veteran producer/engineer Jon Astley says his primary goal in remixing and remastering tracks for the boxed set "The Who: 30 Years Of Maximum R&B" was to "re-create the same picture as the original. Not only brighten up the sound, but carefully transfer it to the digital domain."

The 42-year-old Astley was one of three producers responsible for the four-CD set, released by MCA in the U.S. and Polydor in the U.K. His role included remixing and remastering a huge chunk of the band's archives, including all of "The Who Sell Out."

"The original master of 'Sell Out' was at the wrong speed," says Astley.

"The eight-track of 'Tommy' I didn't touch, because MCA had already remastered and reissued that on CD. [For] 'Magic Bus' I couldn't find the master tape."

"In the end, we did get rid of a lot of tape hiss. I also tried to re-create a plate echo by using an old Lexicon 224 to get a plate sound that was close to the original."

Astley transferred the vintage four-, eight-, and 16-track masters direct to 32-track Mitsubishi digital. The tapes were then remixed via Focusrite, Neve VR, and AMEK 2500 consoles straight to a Sadie hard-disk editor using Prism, Apogee, and Sony A/D converters.

The majority of the restoration work was conducted in London at Metropolitan and Eel Pie Studios, who guitarist Pete Townshend's studio, and in Manchester at Revolution Studios.

"A lot of the 16-track and 24-track Ampex tapes [from] the '70s were deteriorating," Astley says. "The oxide was coming off, so some of the tapes had to be baked. Ampex did that for free."

The project, originally envisioned as a compilation of previously released material, was expanded to include

unreleased studio and live recordings. Consequently, sorting through years of tapes that Astley—Townshend's law and colleague—taught him to handle.

"He knew I was a tape freak," says Astley of Townshend, who knew where the tape was on them. I said, 'the multitracks.'"

Astley's working relationship with Townshend dates back to 1965, when Astley was assisting studio veteran, Glyn Johns on Clapton's album "Slo." Those sessions, Johns recalls, "Glyn asked me to do it? So I said, 'Pete.'"

Astley ended up co-producing "Who Are You" and helped "Pete" come in with a hit. "Then Glyn said, 'We're out.' The next day a six-minute version and that became the album. Astley has since

other Townshend albums. (Continued)

EUROSOUNDS

A column by Zenon Schoepe on the European pro audio industry.

Magmasters in London. An AMS Logic 3 and a

THE INNOCENCE MISSION

"I don't have a translation," says The Innocence Mission's Karen Peris almost apologetically about the name of her Lancaster, Penn.-based band. "It's just a name that makes me think of a place. We wanted a visual name, and Innocence Mission sounds like a haven or a place to get away from everything."

The Innocence Mission is a haven from the crowded pop jungle. Its self-titled LP is a quiet, textural foray into songs that are evocative musically and lyrically. And with Peris' pure, clear voice and conversational phrasing, comparisons to Kate Bush, Rickie Lee Jones and Jane Siberry are inevitable.

Produced by Larry Klein, The Innocence Mission is the work of a young band finding its own voice. If "Black Sheep Wall," a song of warning from an older sister to a younger brother, or "Come Around," which deals with grandparents' isolation and loneliness, don't seem like traditional themes, then the foursome has accomplished what it set to do.

"Some of the songs, I hope, people will be comforted by and some are surreal," explains Peris' husband/bandmate Don, 25. "But mostly, they're story songs and as long as people can see themselves or people they know in them, then we're doing fine."

The pair met in a high school production of "Godspell" and got together to play guitars and write songs almost immediately. "We joked about getting married the first week, but what we really wanted to do was put together a band," Karen says.

Local gigs led to an attorney, a deal, then Klein and manager Peter Asher, and The Innocence Mission finds the stakes are changing just as quickly. As Peris explains, "It's harder to finish a song now, because we want so much more. Now there's this thing in the back of your head that you aren't just writing for yourself, but for other people, and you want it to be good for them."

—Holly Gleason



Innocence Mission (l-r): Karen Peris, Mike Blits, Don Peris and Steve Brown

FELL THROUGH THE CRACKS

December means getting a chance to play catch-up.

These are some artists we missed out on in '89.

Now you have no excuse.

"We started this band 'cause we wanted to write music that we wanted to write, and not care if it was commercial or not," says Tim P. "We wanted to write from the heart. We felt that if we could write this kind of music and play it, people would respond. I don't think we'd know where we are if they didn't."

—Dave High

BEAUSOLEIL

A few years back, playing reels and jigs in a Cajun-based string band wouldn't have seemed like much of a recipe for broad pop success. But along came Beausoleil, which, led by fiddler/vocalist Michael Doucet, has managed not only to revive a slew of Cajun-music tradition and mix 'em up with other ingredients but also to place the resulting spicy gumbo on such high-profile vehicle as Garrison Keillor's NPR show "Prairie Home Companion" and the hit movie "The Big Easy."

"Ten years ago, Cajun culture was at a really low ebb," says Doucet from his bayou home, before flashing his ready wit: "That's before they had anything called Cajun restaurants, of course." If people have let them

FLIES ON FIRE

There's a cool new band rising out of L.A., but don't worry, it's not the second coming of Guns N' Roses or yet another resurrection of Poison. Flies on Fire are a shoot-from-the-hip, roadhouse rock'n'roll band, much like you might find in any weathered dive across America. It's rock'n'roll the way it was meant to be: solid, simple and straight to the point.

"Since this was our first record, we wanted it to be definitive," says drummer Richie D'Albis. "We didn't want people to say we sounded too much like this or that particular band. We wanted to set our own agenda and leave it at that. The production is very minimal and basic. We weren't too heavily into strings, although we did use horns and a couple of things, but the accent was more on the songs first and production second."

The Flies first got together as a trio consisting of D'Albis, singer/guitarist Tim P. and bassist Terry Messal about three-and-a-half years ago. It wasn't until after the Atco deal was signed last April that guitarist Howard Drossin was added. After hooking up with producer Ric Browde, things began to fall together. The Flies found their Stones-ish grunge-groove on such songs as "C'mon," "Long Gone Dead" and "Baptise Me Over Elvis Presley's Grave."



RICK OLIVER

stomachs lead their ears, it's OK with him: "We never tried to be a commercial group, so we're actually confused by our success. We were so well-accepted in Europe before we were here, it's ironic."

So for Beausoleil, named after the leader of the 1755 Acadian revolt against British rule, playing the music is a way of preserving its beloved Cajun culture. Doucet explains, "We really respect the elder musicians who came before us, and their treatments of the songs we choose. We're trying to bring out styles that have been forgotten or covered up. We're not trying to preserve a fly in amber; we want to break that fly out. Let him move."

—Gene Santoro



Flies on Fire (l-r): Tim P., Richie D'Albis, Howard Drossin and Terry Messal

Pennsylvania musician



Vol. VIII #2 February, 1990

M A G A Z I N E



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Animal Logic at Club Met Feb. 12th
- Paradise Alley Monday Blues Nite
- Mechanicsburg's Paradise Nite Spot

ROCKS ON !!

• Coming to the Countryside Kody Lee
plus news, reviews and schedules for you!



INNOCENCE MISSION



THE OCEAN BLUE



SIRE



reprise



Attn: Meredith Louie
RCA Records

Dear Meredith,

This is an official request for two tickets (myself and my wife) for the November 22nd show in Alexandria at the Birchmere. I'd like to do a live review of the show, and then distribute the review to my database of publications. I've been a fan of the band for quite some time and I'm looking forward to seeing them perform again.

I've enclosed my review of The Innocence Mission's album "*Birds of My Neighborhood*" down below. The review has appeared so far in the following zines and web zines: Mood Swings, Muzikman's Sound Script, Altar Native, Rambles, Acme City, Crying Clown Fanzine, Purr Magazine, Review Realm, The Crass Menagerie, Geoff Wilbur's Renegade Newsletter, OUAS Online Music Magazine, and Renegade Rock (Brazil), Nasentocas Crew Magazine (Brazil). Most of these sites are linked to on the Kneeling Elephant's Innocence Mission news page under "Various Publications, August 1999."

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Of course, this is only one of three reviews that I've done of IM albums. If you'd like to see those reviews or hear more about what I do, please give me a call or e-mail. Perhaps one day, you'd like to hear how I got into this whole publicity thing in the first place. I'll just say for now, that if it wasn't for Karen, Don, Steve and Mike...I'd be outta one cool job.

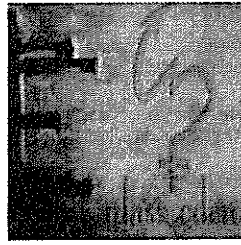
Sincerely,

Keith Abbott
President

Abbott Promotions - P.O. Box 35558 - Richmond, VA 23235 - Tel/Fax (804) 897-2324 - Email: apromo@home.com

"Glass Eden" - Self Financed

An album of many faces. Industrial originality mixed with low-fi distortions of turbinated guitars. For some moments the stylistic changes, that by one side presented us with different songs, seems that will steal the identity and the concept value of the work (MOB's fatal error), however the eletronic noise of the group, overall, remains intact and reminding me, sometimes, the insanity of Test Dep, from the 80's. Fortunately, several miles ahead of NIN or Marilyn Manson. E-mail: info@glasseden.com. (W.S.)

**IMMOLATION** 🐼🐼🐼🐼**"Failure for Gods" - Metal Blade**

In a blistering roar, Immolation returns with their third album "Failures for Gods". This perfect marriage of darkness and brutality threatens to catapult them into the larger death metal arena where tired former giants like Morbid Angel and Cannibal Corpse have resided for too long. The music itself is what fans have come to expect from Immolation, as it is heavy death metal with just enough technical aspects to make it interesting and unique. Guitarists Bob Vigna and Tom Wilkinson have created a rich tapestry of jagged riffs that wail and dive in diabolical combinations while Alex Hernandez's drumming compliments the chaos with razor-sharp accuracy and some surprising additions that augment the technical nature of the songs. As always Ross Dolan's brooding vocals round out the vicious attack along with a more audible and crushing bass line this time around. To be sure, this album is a perfect fusion of the last two album's best elements, making it arguably the best overall release thus far. Long time fans will not be disappointed and newcomers will find a very powerful introduction with "Failures for Gods". This is easily the best death metal release of 1999. (J.T.)

**INNOCENCE MISSION, THE** 🐼🐼🐼**"Birds of My Neighborhood" - Kneeling Elephant Records**

The Innocence Mission have once again concocted a palette full of memorable swirling melodies that evoke time, place and spirit. On their fourth album, both traditional and electrified folk preside over the Victorian rock from their past. A definitive purchase for Neil



Young, John Denver (They cover "Follow Me"),
 Toni Mitchell and Paul Simon covers. (K.A.)

Tour dates Bands Subscribe E mail Studios Reviews Zines/Labels n' Otherss

Notes

Beirute

The *Beirute* appeared in 1996 and keeps the same formation since 97. The band intends to develop a work of musical research in the rhythm ROCK, pure and simple, without fusion, percussion or pretensions to save the world. After all of accounts, ROCK IS ALWAYS ROCK!

The main influences are Neil Young, Wilco, Hendrix, and others power trios of years 70 in general. Lots of jams and endless gigs characterize this brazilian trio.

It is easy to perceive the innumerable bands who are influenced by the Beirute, as O PORCO !, the Badminton, the Divine Brown, being the most known of all, the Supersoniques. It is impressive as a so new band already influenced so much people.

The Beirute is:

PAUL RAMONE: vocal and guitar (in the truth, the only one that plays what really likes)

JOHNNY WHITE: bass e voice (it would like to play guitar)

A.WATANOSE: drums (it would like to play guitar)

CONTACTS:

Beirute -PE-

Rua Manoel G. de Souza 1197 / 304
(0 XX 81) 431 2863
wreck18@hotmail.com

If you want to be present in this section* just join us by sending your material (tape or CD) to:

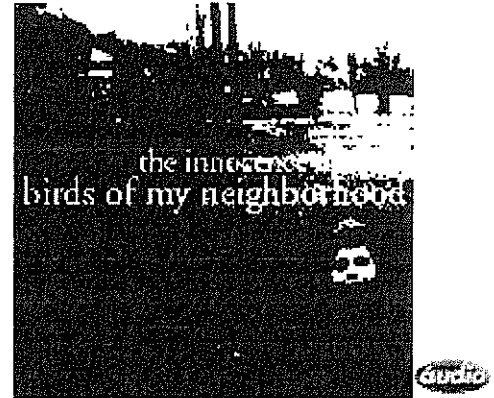
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The Innocence Mission

Birds of My Neighborhood

Kneeling Elephant Records

After a four year absence, the Innocence Mission pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell with their fourth album, *Birds of My Neighborhood*. Lead singer, Karen Peris says, "*We've been so affected by their music. I think we're drawn to sparse song arrangements in part because we've loved their records so much.*"

Although this album is traditional in its folk style, many of the songs arrangements carry electric guitar, organ, piano, bass and tambourine with a splatter of drums. This is a somewhat departure from the Victorian rock of their past, which includes three albums produced by Larry Klein and Dennis Herring on A&M Records.

The Innocence Mission have ultimately taken over where they left off since the release of *Glow*, the band's third album, which boasted a top 20 AAA hit "*Bright as Yellow*". The last song on *Glow*, "*I Hear You Say So*," was not only a fan favorite, but a predecessor to what you'll hear on *Birds of My Neighborhood*: a palette full of memorable swirling melodies that evoke time, place and spirit.

Karen says, "*Sometimes with songs there is a longing to express what is inexpressible, the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of being alive, and to say how hope illuminates the darker days.*" For nearly 20 years, it's this kind of music The Innocence Mission has been making...music that touches the heart of



"Birds of My Neighborhood" by The Innocence Mission Kneeling Elephant Records

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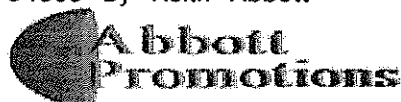
1. Where Does The Time Go?
2. Snow
3. Follow Me
4. The Lakes of Canada
5. You Are The Light
6. Birdless
7. I Haven't Seen This Day Before
8. She May Turn Around
9. I Was In The Air
10. July
11. Going Away
12. Green Grass, Red Tree

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The Innocence Mission

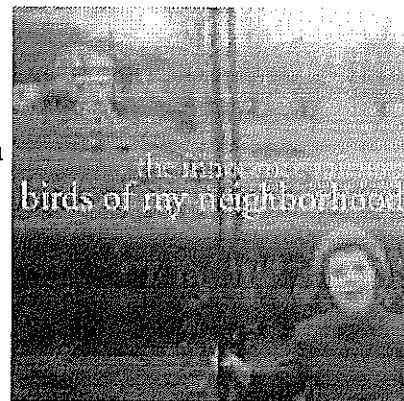
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BY KEITH ABBOTT

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Photos provided by Kneeling Elephant Records.

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