

STACKS

A monthly review of newly acquired records in my collection

Issue #2

November 2023

The Beths
FUTURE ME HATES ME



THE BETHS

FUTURE ME HATES ME

I only found The Beths thanks to a recommendation I asked for at Rattleback Records here in Chicago. And this was only about a week ago, but since then, The Beths have dominated my personal listening charts.

Coming from New Zealand, they're a real infectious indie rock group whose songs tend to deal with troubles we all know too well from our own lives. I feel like their songs about self-deprecation and anxiety are really a big reason in why I've latched onto them so tightly.

Songs like Future Me Hates Me, Uptown Girl, Happy Unhappy, and a slew of songs from their other albums (Especially Expert in a Dying Field, but that album will be a discussion for another time.) have started to become the soundtrack of my daily bike rides. They have this amazing ability to exude the good vibes even if their songs aren't exactly about the good vibes.

If you're a fan of bands like Echosmith, Boygenius, or even just indie rock in general, then Future Me Hates Me will make a sound addition to your collection.

The Beths

CHess

1984 CONCEPT ALBUM

Hoo boy, this is the big one for me.

Chess is my favorite album, and favorite musical of all time. With music by Benny and Bjorn from ABBA and lyrics by Tim Rice, this album has brought me in contact with people I never would have imagined meeting and really helped me make friends that live on the other side of the world.

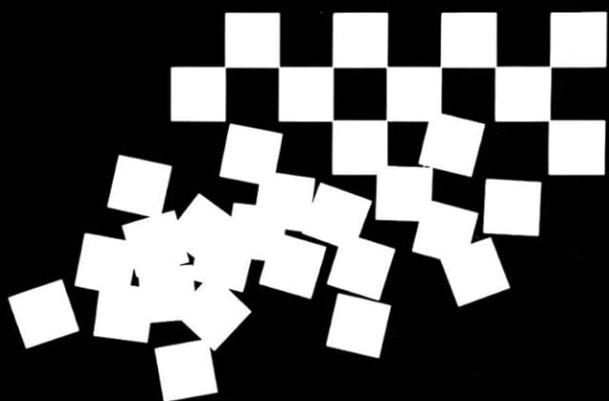
So the original concept album has a few familiar performers, Murray Head as Freddie Trumper the hot-headed and fervent anti-communist chess player from America, Elaine Page as Freddie's manager and maybe(?) girlfriend who leaves him for his Russian competitor Anatoly Sergievsky played by Tommy Korberg. The plot of the album centers around a Chess match between the American and the Russian during the Cold War with a love triangle and international politics and intrigue thrown in.

The album was rather successful in the UK and Europe with songs like I Know Him So Well and Heaven Help My Heart climbing the charts there, while here in the US the only one to really make it big being One Night in Bangkok.

Later it landed a production on the West End in 1986 and a far less successful Broadway run in 1988 that had massive changes to it's source material. Because of this productions are far more frequent in the UK than here in the US. I only just got to see a production at the Muny in St. Louis and it was spectacular.

Currently I own two copies of this album on vinyl, one being a Japanese pressing and the other being a US pressing. I also own a bootleg of demos, and an airplay sampler (Chess Moves) from the UK.

CHESS



BENNY ANDERSSON

TIM RICE

BJÖRN ULVAEUS



NATEWANTSTOBATTLE

FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S

ULTIMATE COLLECTION

Not gonna lie, this album was an impulse buy. But surprisingly not one I regret.

I won't blame you if you don't recognize the artist, NateWantsToBattle (or Nathan Sharp) is a music YouTuber who often releases fansongs of various video games alongside his own original work. For a long time he's been making songs inspired by the Five Nights At Freddy's games and now they're all here on one album.

Admittedly it is very hard to separate the songs from the games that inspired it, but if you're either 1) a fan of FNAF or 2) a fan of Emo/Alt-Rock in general you could have a good time listening to this.

I was in middle school when a lot of these songs released on Youtube and songs like Mangled and Nightmare are big standouts. And Sharp's guitar and voice skills are really on full display here. With the songs included ranging from chill emo-inspired songs to full on vocal chord rending screamo.

However I do feel like the FNAF-ness of it all makes it a bit unapproachable for some people. Especially considering it's been impossible to escape the franchise since day one of its release and even more so now that the movie has been released. Still, I do think the songs here are very well written and probably wouldn't be noticed if you slip one or two into an appropriate playlist.

That being said it might just only be worth pulling out for Halloween.

SYSTEM GLITCH

BEYOND STARS

This album was a joy when I found it in the bargain bin. It is rare that I ever come across Synthwave or Vaporwave albums in the wild so I always make a point to grab them when I see them.

Beyond Stars is a great album dripping with all the 80's synthwave and cyberpunk vibes that one can handle and even has a story to tell, although that story is loose and not as tight as other concept albums, the opening of the first track, Umbra brings us to a planet in flames and the music that follows really solidifies that.

Standout tracks include the instrumental tracks No Escape and Light-speed, and honestly the instrumental tracks really carry the album. While there are a few tracks here with lyrics like I Remember, Young and Wild and Free, and Stars Shine Bright they are served dripping with a healthy amount of cheese. That being said Youn and Wild and Free is probably the strongest of the tracks with lyrics.

This album can be a tough sell to people that aren't already fans of the Synthwave genre and I'd point first point new comers elsewhere. However if you're already deep in the Synth/Vaporwave rabbit hole this is a good album to check out. I just hope you're cool with extra cheese.



BEYOND STARS

SYSTEM
GLITCH





FLEETWOOD MAC

THE ALTERNATE RUMOURS

What hasn't been said about Fleetwood Mac?

What hasn't been said about Rumours?

I'm not going to beat around the bush, Rumours is a landmark album and an absolute must-have and The Alternate Rumours is amazing as well.

Consisting of Demos, Alternate Mixes and Takes, the Alternate Rumours isn't necessarily a completely different 'what could have been' album as the title might suggest. I see it more as a peek behind the curtain of the creative process of an amazing group at a rocky point in their personal lives (much as I see the original Rumours.)

However, I'd only recommend this one for people that are completionists in their Fleetwood Mac collection, as while it's interesting and cool to have I would hardly say it's necessary unless you're a really big fan of Fleetwood Mac. This is coming from someone who now owns three different versions of Rumours (Original, Live, Alternate) and honestly nothing else Fleetwood Mac related in my record collection. (I do have all their albums digitally, however) Perhaps that means that I have more of a rabbit hole to dive into at some point, or that I just really like Rumours by Fleetwood Mac and nothing else. Honestly either could be true.

FLEETWOOD MAC

***This Month:
Syst3m Glitch!
The Beths!
Fleetwood Mac!
Freddy Fazbear!
Chess!***

Lennon McCrea (She/Her) Zine #25
Chicago 2023
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