

PERE UBU
Why I Hate Women
Glitterhouse Records GRCD 651

Pere Ubu have really come out fighting with WHY I HATE WOMEN, racing towards all horizons at full tilt, pushing the experimental envelope further than ever, but also tightening up their trademark avant-punk attack.

If St Arkansas saw them rooting around furtively in rock's darkest, dankest corners, on WHY I HATE WOMEN Ubu seem to illuminate these secret spaces with firework displays and thousand-watt searchlights.

The rhythm section (Ubu's longest serving) of bassist Michele Temple and drummer Steve Mehlman is tauter and leaner than ever before. Robert Wheeler's bravura performance on vintage electronics has him coming over as rural Ohio's answer to Sun Ra, splattering analogue synth and theremin all over the music with wild, visionary abandon. Guitarist (and newest recruit) Keith Moliné veers between wayward sonic expressionism and disciplined garage thrust.

At the eye of the storm is singer David Thomas, a true rock maverick at the height of his powers. His vocal approach shows a startling new melodicism, a plaintive purity of expression that cuts through his familiar repertoire of radical voicings and techniques. Lyrically he manages to balance stormy obsessiveness with flashes of playful wit, refracting standard rock themes (love and obsession) through the looking glass of his boundless imagination.

WHY I HATE WOMEN is a spacious, immediate and vibrant document. The thunderously exciting "Caroleen" and "Flames Over Nebraska" spotlight some smart, sardonic riffing, while "Texas Overture" is a joyous, addictive lope. "2 Girls (One Bar)" and "Mona" are wired, edgy and jagged. "Babylonian Warehouses" and "Love Song" are beautiful epics of torment and yearning. There's also more improvised work than usual; "Blue Velvet," "Synth Farm" and "Stolen Cadillac" are stunningly focused studio jams, the latter featuring Wheeler and Moliné weaving unearthly drones around Temple's beautifully measured bass figure. Temple also contributes a lead vocal to the haunted vignette "My Boyfriend's Back." And of course there's Thomas's incredibly distinctive production style to savour, a kind of hyper-naturalism (see footnote below) that cloaks each sound - Mehlman's mesmerising drums in particular - in dark, spectral electricity.

EXPLANATION OF TITLE: Why I Hate Women is based on the Jim Thompson novel he never wrote but would have. ("The title came to me as I was sitting in my local pub. Knowing what would lay ahead I was not happy. Weeks went by as I searched in vain for an alternative.")

Produced by David Thomas

Engineered by Paul Hamann at Suma, Painesville OH (Grand Funk Railroad, The James

Gang, The Outsiders, Firehose)

Thanks to Dids for input.

Package design by John Thompson and Mimi Thompson, www.idrome.net.

Portions recorded at Homer Page Farm, Harvest Moon, The Red Roof in Willoughby OH (Room 143) and The Farm (Utica PA).

All songs written by Pere Ubu and ©2006 Bug Music.

Pere Ubu is

David Thomas: vocals

Keith Moliné: guitar, backing vocals, bass

Robert Wheeler: EML synthesizer, theremin

Michele Temple: bass, lead vocal

Steve Mehlman: drums, clave, wood block

Rodolphe Burger plays stylophone on Texas Overture. Robert Kidney plays lead guitar on Love Song. Jack Kidney plays harp on Blue Velvet and tenor sax on Synth Farm. Andy Diagram plays trumpet on Mona.

Footnote:

David Thomas notes:

"What the writer refers to as my 'hyper-naturalistic' recording method is as follows. I don't use eq in the mix stage. I don't believe in torturing sound waves. Over the years Paul Hamann has invented and built a number of specialized microphones for my use. They have names like The Box, The Fly's Eye, The Horn, The West, The Phone and The Fan. Other less successful models have come and gone. These microphones are designed to capture the sound of an instrument or voice in a very limited frequency range. I record most instruments with many different mics. Typically the drums will be recorded with 20 or more microphones though rarely do I use more than 4-8 of them for any one song. If I feel that a sound in the mix stage needs to sound differently I alter the balance of the specialized mics. Transience makes me nervous so I like there to be gaps in the transience. I don't like using 'store-bought' audio effects. On WIHW I think I used only one such unit, a Lexicon on a minor backing vocal part - mainly cuz we were in a hurry and it was a small part. Otherwise all effects are from room mics, a spring reverb from an old Hammond B-3, my specialized microphones and maybe an echo plate. I like sounds to have plenty of spikes. If I use compression at all I only use it full on - hard-crunching and unsubtle."