

LEFT OF THE DIAL



Outkast
Idlewild
(La Face Records)

Back in 2000, Outkast released *Stankonia*, a funk/soul/gangsta explosion that is now the stuff of legend. It was three years before they released a followup, and it seemed that the duo had nowhere to go but down. Then came *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*, the two-headed hip-hop monster that not only reinforced Outkast's status as rap royalty, but took a stab at the pop music throne as well. Once again, Antwan Patton (aka Big Boi) and André Benjamin (aka André 3000) have waited three years between projects, but history isn't quite repeating itself. On the soundtrack album to the lavish movie/musical *Idlewild*, Outkast has taken on a little bit more than it can chew. *Idlewild* is an obvious attempt to conquer the entertainment world a la *Purple Rain*, which doesn't come as much of a surprise; of all the influences behind *The Love Below*, Prince came through the clearest. Unfortunately, for all of its purple-clad aspirations, *Idlewild* is more like U2's *Rattle & Hum*: a really good record that gets greedy and ends up buried in its own ambition. When it's good, it's fantastic, especially when the duo incorporates Depression-era juke-joint grooves into its Southern-fried brand of hip-hop. On "PJ & Rooster," Outkast takes ragtime piano, muted trumpets, a walking bass

line and an homage to "The Entertainer" and creates a track that is both nostalgic and primed for contemporary dance floors. "Idlewild Blue (Don't Chu Worry 'Bout Me)" does the same thing with Delta blues; it's a smart, catchy, adventurous single that shows what a master pop craftsman André 3000 has become. Big Boi is also at the top of his game on "N2U" and "In Your Dreams," delivering masterful machine-gun rhymes over richly produced funk and R&B beats. While there are plenty of high points, there's also a lot of filler over the course of *Idlewild's* 25 tracks, including six interludes and several half-baked songs. "Hollywood Divorce" is probably the most heinous of the lot, a five-and-a-half-minute snooze-fest marked by a slogging beat and totally half-assed verses from Lil' Wayne and Snoop Dogg ("You played me/Like a game of football" is just one of many uninspired moments). Other tracks are just disposable, like the frantic vaudevillian comedy of "Makes No Sense at All" and the Macy Gray-laden "Greatest Show on Earth," a three-minute torch song that just seems to go on forever. Despite these setbacks, *Idlewild* is a more-than-worthy listen. It takes risks, shines brightly and exudes confidence even as the wheels are falling off. It's kind of like having sex with Marlon Brando on the set of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*: There's a masterpiece in there somewhere, you just have to dig through the excess fat to find it.

—joe sweeney



Motorhead
Kiss of Death
(Sanctuary)

It's nice to know that in today's changing universe (we're losing goddamned planets people!—looks like My Very Educated Mother Just got tired of Serving Us those Nine stinkin' Pizzas!) some things remain constant; if you never liked Motorhead before...don't worry...you still won't! If you've simply never listened to Motorhead before, I'll wait while you go give yourself a brief orientation—run out to the side of the road and violently scrape your ears against the gravel shoulder for 45 minutes—now you're properly warmed up for the classic, timeless voice of one Lemmy Kilmeister. From the opening crunch of "Sucker" ("What we do is break the law/We've tasted blood and we want more!"), the first four songs are relentless; if you're not shot-gunning beers by the end of "Trigger," well, you're not invited to my party. "One Night Stand" with its heavy honky-tonk feel and "Devil I Know" ("I might be a dog, honey, but you're a bitch!") which will, from this day forward, be officially known as the "Motorhead Break-Up Song," round out the initial assault. "Kingdom of the Worm" has some nice thrash-metal elements to it but sounds like it would be more at home on an Iron Maiden album, and the studio version of "R.A.M.O.N.E.S." is

okay, but also seems a bit out of place. *Kiss of Death's* lyrics find Lemmy as smart and smart-assed as ever. The rhythm section is powerful and although my metal-hungry ears sometimes crave more in the way of guitar solos, there's no more perfect sound for toasting the end of Pluto's reign!

—t-rox

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