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Bats and Mice

Believe It Mammals

Lovitt
 2002
 B



Obvious expectations arise when the "ex-members of" is mentioned in relation to Bats and Mice. Certainly the average listener of the "ex-bands" (including The Sleepytime Trio, 400 Years, Milemarker and Men's Recovery Project) would expect this new incarnation to travel along similar paths of destruction and aural chaos, but Bats and Mice is not at all the sum of their parts. According to their website, Bats and Mice "intends to dash the expectations of listeners who anticipate "ex-members of Band X" to fit Band X", and listening to this release I'm inclined to agree.

With *Believe It Mammals*, Bats and Mice create an album that is almost shockingly free of influence from their previous bands, though that is probably the point. In playing music that is almost completely opposite of their past creations, it would probably be rather difficult for remnants to carry over. It is not surprising that *Believe It Mammals* was released by Lovitt Records, as they have been the home to a good portion of the "ex-bands" and has been assisting this transition from spastic hardcore to quiet, melodious rock.

What is surprising is the overall quality of this disc as it stands apart from the "ex-members" tag. As the first full length recording (they had an EP prior to this album, also on Lovitt), though, it obviously has a little room for improvement, most notably, in the differentiation of one guitar from the other. Through a good portion of the recording, only one guitar is heard. Perhaps the second guitar is simply mixed lower than the other, but in a way, it detracts from the possibility of this album. How much better would it be if the guitar was mixed a bit louder?

Also, while the vocal harmonies are beautiful, at times they are a bit much. Perhaps it isn't the harmony that is irritating, but more that they sound a bit too swanky and smooth in comparison to the music they are sung over. In the end, it gives an overproduced feel and they sound more out of place than they really are.

Apart from those small problems (which is probably more personal preference than anything else), this is a very good release. Rock music that is quiet (and alternately, loud) as the moment dictates. Vocals-- which are at times reminiscent of Jejuné and Milemarker-- work dynamically with the music, complementing the soft guitar and solid drum work. Recommended with an open mind.

Reviewed by: Al Charity

Reviewed on: 2003-09-01

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