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The Wolves

Art. Culture. Work.

Coalition Records

2002

C+

From the ashes of recently disbanded hardcore outfit Orchid rose several new bands, each holding promise to be the newest version of the felled flagship band. It may be true that the others might take a bit to fully acquaint oneself to- quoting a friend of a friend on this realization: "Once I got over the concept of a band being of Orchid, but not actually Orchid, I could enjoy it".

Even with that fully detached objectivity, The Wolves only seem to hint at what could become fully realized, perhaps with a bit more time together as a band. *Art Culture Work* begins strongly enough, hinting at a record collection (collecting dust in the members' individual bedrooms) containing earlier recordings from Richmond Virginia area bands (circa 1995) in addition to slight stylistic resemblance to The Universal Order of Armageddon (which their label Coalition Records hints at, but ends up being a relatively false herring in this case).

Midway through the disc, The Wolves undergo a change, removing themselves from the stronghold of east coast influence to expound upon the second label ordained likeness, Gravity Records (presumably any band that fit into their catalog in the early Nineties). Much like the bands in the actual Gravity Records roster, I am respectful of what I hear, but it simply is not all that moving- in terms of its affect upon me (the listener) and in their songwriting. The Wolves, at this point, seem to rely a bit too heavily upon redundancy and repetition of theme to achieve their ultimate end.

Towards the final songs, The Wolves lean back to the East to draw inspiration, creating two of the more interesting songs on the discs (the only detraction being the looped sample mixed far too loudly throughout the last few minutes of the final song).

However dissimilar The Wolves are from other post-Orchid projects, they do meet politically (at least with the Panthers, in which Jayson singer and lyricist of Orchid is a member), with their situationist leanings. Unlike later Orchid (and again, the Panthers), The Wolves expand upon those ideas, relying not only on the past (the political activity surrounding the formation of this particular set of theories) but attempt to incorporate those ideas into their lives and (ultimately, I suppose) everyone else's. Their goal isn't to merely educate the listener of the past, but to provide real application to their individual life.

The method in which The Wolves approach this album is admirable- they create a CD which speaks, somewhat, musically and textually. Unfortunately they seem to falter in their delivery of message, with songwriting that seems to be that of a band still fleshing out a style. This, coupled with the fact that they are still attempting to maintain ideas gleaned through years of involvement in subversive culture, makes the Wolves *Art Culture Work* a muddled debut that points to two possible paths for the band in future releases. Perhaps, on their next release, The Wolves will become the band that they wish to become.

Reviewed by: Al Charity

Reviewed on: 2003-09-01

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