Devo defended: Album is fun

To the Editor:

We are disgusted and disappointed with Mr. Perl's recent review of Devo's new album, Oh No, It's Devo! [Dec. 10]. We thought Mr. Gitlow's reviews were repugnant, but this one takes the proverbial cake. Mr. Perl's comments are entitled to his own opinion, as is every mongoloid, but his choice of lyrics to describe the album was worse than poor; it was inexcusable. Admittedly, "Speed Racer" is one of the highest points on the album, but even "Peek-a-Boo," which has a minimal amount of lyrics, manages to push a sorely-needed point across: "If you cannot think it's not there; it doesn't work that way."

"Time Out For Fun," one of the songs that doesn't quite "achieve mediocrity" sums up the entire album and Devo as a whole.

It was interesting to see the crowd at the recent Devo concert. Most of the members were in the 20- to 25-year-old age group. This is unlike (we've been told) recent concerts of groups that have attracted the average 16-year-old girl clad in mini-skirt and elf boots. The fact that Devo attracts a more sophisticated following is beside the point. (But we mentioned it anyway.)

Devo's lyrics are often weird, satirical, and ridiculous, but they're meant to be that way. Devo's lyrics, we're afraid, are jokes, but they meant to be that way. This is very much unlike other contemporary groups which have ridiculous lyrics written, unfortunately, to be taken seriously. Who can forget beauties like "We come from the land down under, where women glow and men plunder," or the classic, "vacation, all I ever wanted?" These lyrics, we're afraid, are jokes, but not funny. Some might even go so far as to say that they're "worthless." (We will, for example.)

As far as marketing $97.20 worth of paraphernalia is concerned, it seems better to produce your own items instead of allowing the leeches and parasites of the world to jump on the bandwagon, as many other groups have allowed.

We can only suggest that, in the future, Mr. Perl's readers relax and take a less critical view of albums that are pure fun, and were meant to be that way. As Devo says in explosions: "We do like music, when it does what it should do."

Carl Bauer '85
John Stein '85
Bob Zaffante '84

Reconsider writing req't

To the Editor:

It appears that another course has been added to the list of those already required for a bachelor's degree at MIT. I am referring to the writing examination ["One in four frosh fails writing exam," Dec. 7].

What the requirement amounts to is another course forced on next-year's freshman class. To be exempted from the required course, one must demonstrate a minimum level of writing proficiency by taking an exam during R/O week. This markedly resembles a requirement for 8.01 (which can also be waived via examination), except that passing the writing exam yields no credit toward the humanities distribution requirement or otherwise.

The Committee on the Writing Requirement believes that only one-third of the Class of 1986 can demonstrate a reasonable level of writing proficiency. My apologies to the committee for smudging its dreams, but not every MIT undergraduate is not arbitrarily labeled "illiterate.

Ralph J. Spicer '86

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