Ric Ocasek’s beat attitude

Ric Ocasek on Geffen Records

Ric Ocasek is an odd figure in rock ‘n’ roll. One of the prototypical new wave collegepop artists, he has led the Boston-bred Cars through four albums full of disjointed emotion and technological alienation to superstar popular status. His new solo album Beatitude, however, indicates a change in style in his music and maybe even a maturation of his entire outlook. Born in the Midwest, Ocasek traveled from there to Boston in the early seventies in hopes of finding a suitable musical climate to start a career. He floated through several bands, playing everything from rock to pop to country-western. By 1977, the Cars had formed, with Ocasek singing and writing songs. Their first nationally-released album was a great success artistically and financially, and the Cars were named Rolling Stone magazine’s top debut band.

Ocasek’s music on the first and subsequent albums was characterized by schizophrenic, stream-of-consciousness lyrics, along with increasingly odd and experimental instrumentation. When the Cars toured, he typically did not display much showmanship, remaining motionless on stage while singing and playing guitar with machinelike deliberation. These traits tended to lend him an image typified by emotive machinelike deliberation. These traits tend-

to intrigue the ear. Even more sadly, the lack of spontaneity in the music tends to dry up any emotion that might be communicated through the lyrics. A true shame:

"Jimmy Jimmy" and "Time Bumb" are not remarkable for the change in style compared to Cars albums of the past, but there’s already enough emotion and sentiment about to prevent these songs from maintaining any interest:

The record’s music is technologically impressive, but it proceeds in an uninspired, clocklike manner, unyielding in its precision. "Jimmy Jimmy" and "Time Bumb" are almost unbearably, offering little to intrigue the ear. Even more sadly, the lack of spontaneity in the music tends to dry up any emotion that might be communicated through the lyrics. A true shame:

Ric Ocasek has incredible talent, as a writer and as a producer. Unfortunately he seems more concerned with playing with sound and amusing himself in the studio than with entertaining his audience.

Steve Hunley

and sentimental. There are no utopian, asynchronous musical tricks to throw off the listener. Ric Ocasek is warming up to his world, and Beatitude is an unusual effort to communicate that fact.

The songs "Prove," and "Connect up with Me" feature surprisingly romantic, personal lyrics. "Something To Grab For" loss, with a beat even, and a rippy lead by New Models guitarist Casey Lindstrom. "A Quick One" is quietly ironic, and "I Can’t Wait" is remarkably frank and unadorned, considering Ocasek’s earlier work.

Still, the album has serious flaws, with both lyrics and music. None of the lyrics offer any terribly original ideas. They are remarkable for the change in style compared to Cars albums of the past, but there’s already enough emotion and sentiment about to prevent these songs from maintaining any interest.

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But with Ocasek’s first solo album, Beatitude, there seems to be a crack in the ice. Many of the album’s lyrics are emotive

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The Tech