Lennon’s myth remains intact

Milk and Honey, John Lennon and Yoko Ono on Polydor Records.

Heart Play — unfulfilled dialogues, John Lennon and Yoko Ono on Polydor Records.

The release of Milk and Honey, the fiftieth and undoubtedly final album by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, comes after two interesting solo albums by Ono, and more than three years after Double Fantasy, the rock's last album together before Lennon's murder in December 1980.

Milk and Honey features six previously unreleased songs by John Lennon, originally meant only as demos which the two expected to polish further before making them commercially available. These songs reaffirm Lennon's Double Fantasy identity as rehabilitated rock star, while at the same time cement his commitment to his artistry. Each of his songs contains a solid musical core supported by insightful and humorous lyrics, a wonderful technique that was perhaps best seen in songs such as "I'm Stepping Out" and "Grow Old With Me". The last song of the Lennon-Boyle period influences evident on "My Little Flower Princess".

Using sharp vocal reminiscence of early-60s Lennon, "Tears and Laughter" deals with being a 40-year-old rock star and househusband. This dexterity is evident in "I'm Stepping Out" as it signs about his decision to re-enter mainstream society after five years of life centered around his family and away from the public eye: "Baby's sleeping. The ears have all been bashed. Ain't nothing doing on TV."

Put on my space suit, I got to look my best. I'm going out to the city. I'm stepping out.

Lennon's songs also touch on his love for wife Yoko Ono; "Grow Old With Me" and "My Little Flower Princess" are dedicated to her. The first of these was meant to be one of the two central works on Double Fantasy, but was not completed in time to be included on that album. As a result, the song seems incomplete and rushed. This should be kept within the context that much of the album was originally never intended for release in the form that it appears.

Lennon is at his best on side one, which is not at all surprising; this had been the case on virtually all of his solo albums. However, the side's real surprise is Ono's emergence as a serious musician. "Don't be Scared" is among her best efforts as a songwriter. She writes beautiful harmonies intertwined with reggae riffs to produce a very catchy tune. Ono's musical fascination with non-traditional and non-inspired songs combine to produce the album's flawless selection of six songs which comprise side one.

This feeling, however, does not continue onto the album's second side. Side two has the same rough-edged feeling as "Grow Old With Me". As a result, the album struggles to maintain any sense of cohesion. Whether Christian Death espouses these beliefs is unclear. The issue apparently has nothing to do with dark imagery. Milk and Honey's only major flaw is the inclusion of a single side-two tune which should have been left off. This alone does not spoil John Lennon's last appearance on record. The myth remains intact.

Christian Death is a strange band. Not so strange because of its music, which still deviates from accepted norms, but because of the individual band members and its members' beliefs. Lennon's songs deal very heavily with the occult, and are particularly laden with references to Satanism. Whether the individual band members are actually devotees of religion's dark side or are only using it as a schtick is not completely clear. Christian Death has been shrouded in mystery since its early days in Los Angeles. It emerged as a pioneer of the "horror rock" movement, a fad which has seen its heyday but still maintains a large following.

This is one helluva strange band. Not so strange, however, because of its music, which still deviates from accepted norms, but because of the individual band members and its members' beliefs. Though much of the album's music is quite danceable, some of it actually beautiful. There is a much stronger beat than is traditional sense. It has a hoarse yet tuneful, urgent, which easily sliced through the crowd'ssic and drums which are often dressed in black flowing capes with ghoulish makeup. Occasionally, they don't vary from black to black, sometimes, it looked like a cheap remake of a bad horror movie. Hardcore punksлотed their bands, even though they came from the same generation of alternative music, for two reasons: the fashion aspect, and the relatively slow grinding beat.

Although more or less loosely associated with the punk movement, Christian Death is not at all surprising; this had been the case with virtually all of his solo albums. As a result, the album struggles to maintain any sense of cohesion. Whether Christian Death espouses these beliefs is unclear. The issue apparently has nothing to do with dark imagery. Milk and Honey's only major flaw is the inclusion of a single side-two tune which should have been left off. This alone does not spoil John Lennon's last appearance on record. The myth remains intact.

Christian Death displayed at the Rathskellar, Thursday, Feb. 16. Christian Death are actually devotees of religion's dark side and are particularly laden with references to Satanism. Whether the individual band members are actually devotees of religion's dark side or are only using it as a schtick is not completely clear. Christian Death has been shrouded in mystery since its early days in Los Angeles. It emerged as a pioneer of the "horror rock" movement, a fad which has seen its heyday but still maintains a large following.

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