The Minutemen: a band that has done it again.

Well, the Minutemen have done it again. After last year's release of Minutemen records; this release is on New Alliance. The Minutemen's latest record, The Politics of Time, is a collection of old tunes which have been collecting dust in the archives. The 27 songs on this album upon the group's career from its embryonic stages in 1979, when it was then known as the Reckonators, to its European tour last year. Of the contents of the album, which generally require contexts guaranteeing exclusive rights to everything produced by an artist, companies drafting alternative music tend to be less restrictive. Often, two labels operating in conjunction with each other will unite in their best interests as the band.

Since SST is accredited with Minutemen's records, they produce more than just SST is, which will clear New Alliance clear out the group's back catalog. New Alliance is perhaps best known for its Life it... series of compilation albums, which features otherwise unavailable tracks by the Minutemen as well as other SST artists. This benefits bands, which often release records only with the proviso that they be available for inclusion on their own records, as well as fans interested in owning copies which otherwise would not be made available to the public.

The Politics of Time should not be considered as the latest Minutemen record, and is not meant to be. It is a retrospective of previously unreleased material which can serve as a history of the band's development into its current form. Overall, this record works when considered in this light, but the material could have been better presented. In particular, a lyric sheet was not included, breaking with the group's previous practices.

The music on The Politics of Time, though, is not much different from other work by the Minutemen. Drummer George Hurley lays down a strong rhythmic foundation which Mike Watt adds layers which are sometimes funny, sometimes panky, but always quirky and full of unrestrained energy. Dennis Boon contributes a noisy and innovative guitar and half-assed, half-scratched vocals.

We could deal with a curt waiter by working, set for a spring release. After this horizon of three recordings in the space of only six months, there will be about a hundred or so Minutemen songs pressed into vinyl. Not bad for a band which has only been in business for four years.

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