

Reviews on Old Forgotten CD's

John 5 Review - Vertigo

"When Goth Goes Bad"

By FuMaku!

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I am impressed with this album! The journeyman guitarist, of K.D. Lang, Two, DLR Band, Marilyn Manson and Rob Zombie fame, amongst others, has put out quite an album. Unfortunately, the cover art and graphics belie the content contained therein. Hence, the title of this very column, "When Goth Goes Bad." More on this later, but first, the music.

This album is excellent! John Lowry can play and he is excellent on this album of instrumental, guitar frenzied tunes. There are 13 tracks on this album that embrace the Mid 80s "shred" ethic. But, there is a twist: there's some country on this record! The songs are mostly speed metal with a twist. Some songs are just all-on speed in the Steve Vai tradition, while several other songs are most definitively country. I'm not a fan of country, but these songs I like. Also, there is one song that recalls Les Claypool/ Primus era semantics, which is pretty interesting. There are weird codified moments on this album, which I find interesting, as well.

Of Diatribes and "When Goth Goes Bad," this album is forever doomed to the cutout bin because of photos and graphics showcasing a bad and tastelessly accoutered John Lowry, now known as John 5, in a bad, train wreck of a Goth look. I understand John Lowry for using the John 5 Moniker, dubbed by Marilyn Manson after Lowry joined Manson's band of unmerry men, but keeping the look? I don't know about you, but I like my album covers to, at least in some small way, reflect what is on the record and the graphics and photos on John 5's first solo album, Vertigo, don't do any such thing.

John is featured in the most prominent photos dressed in a bad Goth get up. First, his hair is blond, which never works with the Goth thing and it gets worse. John has full sleeve tattoos on his arms, which adds a certain biker charm to the mix, which is emblematic of the clashing styles that find a home on Lowry's frame. Of special note: the exaggerated clown lips, painted on a blond Goth biker's frame. When have clowns ever been cool! Oh and here's the best part: There's no Goth on this album! Not a bit, not a desultory tone, to be heard on this album.

Which is fine with me, Goth's a little played at this point. But you know what? Screw the crappy look and the crappy graphics, this album rocks. So John made a major fashion faux faux, the music still kicks and is interesting if you like fast licks with a healthy dose of the adventurous.