

Brainwashed - Soccer Mom, "You Are Not Going To Heaven"

Written by Creag Dunton

Saturday, 27 August 2011 21:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 28 August 2011 23:40



Mixing an unabashed appreciation for the alternative scene of the early to mid 1990s, Boston's Soccer Mom have a familiar, but not derivative sound that arouses nostalgia without being stuck in the past.

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Putting this EP on, I was instantly reminded of that post-Nirvana world of alternative that briefly existed before it became commercially viable. The sort of music that was played on the original incarnation of *120 Minutes*: the residuals of jangly '80s melodies and the feedback and distortion that bands like Loop did so well.

"Salty Wyoming," for example, pushes a bit of that early REM jangle with outbursts of tremolo-laden guitar squall that, at the time, were very different scenes, but here the two sides come together perfectly, resulting in a catchy song that feels familiar, yet retains its own identity.

Other tracks, like "Celebrity Unrest," are a bit more adventurous: after a protracted, chugging instrumental intro, vocals appear briefly, only to lead to the song fragmenting itself, leaving traces of feedback and deliberate guitar melodies behind before launching together once again.

The atmospheric "Unwanted Sounds" also strikes a delicate balance, with a rather pretty ambient backing juxtaposed with rapid-fire drums and overdriven bass. Similarly, the initially skeletal structure of "Southern Bells" becomes fleshed out with sheets of caustic guitar that just as quickly pull away to its original sparseness.

While I usually go for harsher, more aggressive sounds, this debut EP manages to bring in just

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the right amount of ugly noise with a catchy framework. Coupled with that warm, inviting feeling that reminds me of watching the VHS tapes of 120 Minutes after school on Monday afternoons, there was a lot to enjoy on here. While '90s nostalgia seems to be rushing in unabated, Soccer Mom isn't riding on that current alone, instead they're channeling the past while still focusing on music more than trends.