



ALBUM REVIEW: X: THC - 'X: THE HUMAN CONDITION'

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This is a magical album, crafted on a backbone of Portishead-style trip-hop and deep, dark and haunting soundscapes ala' Depeche Mode. It starts off with 'Hide' creates an ominous introduction using spoken word before breaking into seductive chill-out goodness that easily rivals the like work of Bjork, His Mighty Robot, Switchblade Symphony and Massive Attack in terms of impact and diversity.

Indeed, what X: THC do is take elements of extremely credible influences and use them to craft their own vibrant and diverse musical mix-up. This variety is reflected perfectly on 'Monster' – on here the band takes on personal themes and ideas with bare lyrics: "I veil my eyes so you can't see inside me' which collide neatly

with some sensitive orchestral moments.

'A Human Flood' quickens the pace and is much heavier in places relying on brooding guitar tones, pained vocals, glitchy electronics and emotive and complex drum work. Follow-up 'The Creature from the Blackened Room' is a hypnotic and chilling journey that examines the complexities of human nature and our desire to be understood and loved – yes, it's dark but it's very accessible and the music is especially uplifting in parts.

Next up, 'Sleeping with One Eye Open' brings us back down, hooking the listener in with Tricky-esque chimes and sharp electronic tinges. Again, this track is built around vocalist and creator Michael Nova's sincere feelings of alienation and the struggle that comes with combating that.

Meanwhile, 'Don't Cry' moves things forward with another accessible electro-pop tune that will anchor fans of everything from Radiohead to IAMX via Darren Hayes – this is our standout track on the album and it really sticks out as a strong indicator of just how relevant and exciting X: THC are within the contemporary new wave scene – it's delicious and positive pop music for those that like to think too much and dare to dream.

'Mr. Happy' is much simpler in its delivery but it's certainly set to be a fan favorite for listeners. While the lyrics may not be the as positive as on previous tracks, the expansive soundscape created by the keyboard work and vocals make this an intriguing listen.

'Like Violins' is a hard-hitting track that takes influence from industrial and rock influence to create a solid groove and a massive chorus that'll have people singing along in the live arena – this is arguably the heaviest track on the record and it features all of the ingredients that a successful crossover act needs to have – a bit of rock, a smidge of electro, a hefty chunk of angst and a dollop of emotion.

'Worth Fighting For' is an unusually straightforward pop track that features some excellent Cure-style notes and affecting lyrics. The final track is 'Tag, You're It' is a fitting ending to a truly invigorating disk – there's a nice mix of jazz and blues influence in this alongside some buzzing electro elements and solid lyrical content.

In summary, X: THC are probably the kind of band that you'd enjoy so much you would want to keep them to yourself, only you won't be able to because you're so damned excited about the music, you have to tell all your friends and family and Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, then of course videos start getting made and reviews start flooding in...

This is a great album. You should check it out. That is all.

