



Muse

Absolution

East West/Taste



By Dan Marek
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So maybe Muse's 1999 debut sounded a bit too much like *Pablo Honey* to get any musical intellectuals interested in its American tour, but time heals all wounds (figuratively) and this U.K. band is ready for its *Absolution*.

With a couple of years brewing in the can, the sound has evolved into something heavier than Radiohead, soft and reaching like Coldplay, which collectively creates a sound all its own.

Where the former two acts have typically led with the singer's far reaching voice and light, airy melodies, Muse adds a driving rhythm that carries the melodies harder than the bands everyone jumps to compare them to.

On "Apocalypse Please" they begin with an '80s synth playing classical undertones, setting up lead singer Matthew Bellamy to release his quivering wrath. "Time is Running Out" begins with a distorted synth bass that drives the rhythm to a simple beat until a whirlwind of guitars comes in for the syncopated chorus and dripping keyboards.

"Stockholm Syndrome," one of the heavier tunes, starts out with a speed metal guitar that generates a surf of noise for Bellamy to ride before the '50s sci-fi sound brings a psychedelic tinge along the driving edge of one of the best songs.

"Blackout" begins with a mystical Spanish guitar that is taken up by a string section while Bellamy croons out a Yorke-ish sounding melody that floats around until the Spanish guitar comes back in fully distorted, but captivatingly fresh.

"Butterflies & Hurricanes" starts off drifty, flying from one flowery sound to the next, then breaks with the beat to lift up into a very windy, twisting beat that picks you up and lets you drift back down on a waft of brilliant piano playing and soft strings.

And finally, with "Thoughts of a Dying Atheist" the album closes in a mellow atmosphere that drives on a Hammond and cuts out in the blink of an eye.

For those of you that are not the biggest Radiohead fans, you might want to skip this release, because of its too-close-to-Yorke lead singer, but for those of you with plenty of RH and Coldplay in your listening circle, you might want to hear a familiar sound with a bit more in-your-face attitude than the technological grind that Radiohead has evolved in to.