

# 'Life': Take a ride to the far side

**A**merican Head is a duo of musical gear heads with too much time on their hands. Its latest album, "This Provincial Life Is Killing Me ...", is the type of album that frustrates critics to no end. Besides being difficult to describe, the album follows no perceivable pattern and prides itself on its obtuse nature.

The boys of American Head are wide open to any and all possibilities and obviously reject categorization. The electro-sonic landscape they have created in 35 songs and close to an hour is a bizarre ride to the far side of any kind of thematic context.

Perhaps the title holds some clue to the nature of the music. Is the duo merely trying to break convention at all costs, and in so doing, break themselves out of the complacency of modern culture at large? Are the audial twists and turns and nonsensical data spewed forth just a way to force the listener to question the traditional view of what can be termed music? Is this Burlington's musical

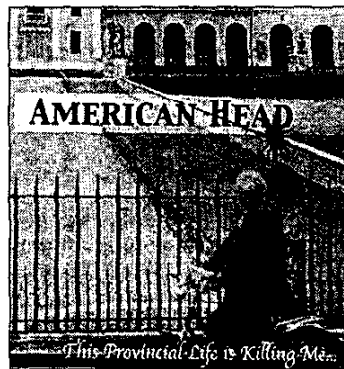
answer to U2's "Zoo TV"?

These are big questions, and American Head takes a dadaist approach to its creations in challenging the conventions — trying to maintain a minimum of form in its farcical circus. Random noise bursts and bits of pop culture outtakes (Chopsticks parts 1, 2, and 3 revive Marilyn Monroe in "The Seven Year Itch") are mixed with aplomb over garbagey and garagey pieces of stuff with more recognizable "musical" foundations.

Occasionally, the duo slips up and actually manages to lay down some tracks with a recognizable and steady beat; momentary, melodic portions also attempt to break on through the parody and the ironic nature of the puzzle's pieces. But

never for very long, and quickly and continually, American Head sounds more like an art project that uses sound (or the background soundtrack to a hip and trendy art installation) rather than what you normally think of a record album. Hell, even techno follows some sort of pattern!

## SCENE & HEARD



■ American Head: "THIS PROVINCIAL LIFE IS KILLING ME ..." No rating — too odd.

It's a stab at pop culture. It's a challenge to convention. And it's silly and odd as hell, even if one track is entitled "We're Not Here to Joke". I'd like to talk to them about it over let's say... 20 cocktails. Maybe then, I could comprehend what they're trying to do.

Being trapped in my own provincial life, which is only mildly hurting and not killing me, I am not capable of judging this music. I doubt I am "cool" or "hip" enough. I'm not an "artist," so I probably don't "get it." The sounds on American Head's CD are certainly fodder for pseudo-

intellectual banter if one so chooses.

All I know is it's pretty darn confusing, which I bet is probably the whole point. Tricky artists. Let's put it this way: Rednecks would turn their noses up, snarl, and threaten to kick some artsy butt if they heard this CD.

I give American Head credit for the technical know-how in putting it all together, all the pieces seem to fit, even in their random way. As oxymoronic as that phrase sounds, I still believe the duo's particular style is more oxy than moronic. There's method to the madness lurking somewhere beneath the twisted, deliriously paranoid and obviously stoned exterior. I hope they have serious intentions on the inside as well. It's more than likely.

If you like the most random music the Burlington music scene has to offer, then you'll love "This Provincial Life Is Killing Me." If you like what you hear, then you'll go ballistic for it's companion video being shown — yes, you guessed it — randomly, on Burlington Public Access Channel 15. Being visually confused is even more fun I suppose.

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