

The Compiler Various artists:
reviewed, rated, reviled

**Messthetics Greatest Hits:
the Sounds Of D.I.Y. 1977-80
HYPED2DEATH CD**

When the protean punk discography, *Volume*, was released in 1980, there were a few of us who devoured it, making huge lists of its unknown records in the process. These lists grew even bigger when the second edition came out, and it became a point of great pride to have actually heard groups like The Scrotum Poles, Reptile Ranch, Steve Treatment, et al. Chuck Warner was at the forefront of those driven to hear it all. Over the past 25 years it's unlikely anyone has actually played (and graded) more obscure singles, cassettes and compilation albums than he. Lurking amongst them were the geniuses of shambolic, skuzzy garage pop, who existed alongside the punks without ever really belonging to them. Warner has since taken to issuing various compilations, as well as single artist sets, drawn from his obsessive listening. Some of them are great and some are hideous (although obscurely hideous). That said, this new CD



The Digital Dinosaurs



showcases the subjective cream of a jillion arcane homemade Brit releases. Of the 22 groups, the best known are perhaps O Level and Digital Dinosaurs. Warner's aesthetic is such that he prefers a bit of a tune to be included in even his most noxious selections, so there's not much here that won't dig hooks deep inside your brain. Fully annotated and programmed beautifully, this CD should be part of everyone's collection. The singles represented here barely existed when they were new. Now, it's as though they were never more than dreams that John Peel had after a particularly large meal. No reason to namecheck. They're all savagely obscure. It's some of the greatest music that never was. BYRON COLEY

www.hyped2death.com