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Hi guys-

Here's a double shot of my baby's lovin'. Miley Cyrus and Paul Gilbert. Hide the women.

Talk soon, P

Miley Cyrus

Breakout CD Review

October 21, 2008

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Anyone who dismisses the impact of 80s pop-cutie Kim Wilde on the current status of mass-appeal radio music is one mistaken puppy. The debut album from Gabriella Cilmi, *Lessons to be Learned* is filled with borrowed musical phrasings and licks from Ms. Wilde's work. Miley Cyrus's second and current release, *Breakout*, is almost a clone of the first Kim Wilde disc, which was released more than 25 years ago. Which, actually, is kind of a good thing. Kim was a studio produced semi-phenomenon who was greatly overlooked by American audiences. Kim was the good-bad pop-chart girl as Joan Jett was the bad-good girl on the fm airwaves. Kim, unfortunately, was greatly overshadowed by Joan's titanic early 80s album, *I Love Rock and Roll*, and subsequently went into an informal retirement by the mid-period of the decade. Miley appears to be picking up Kim's slack and continuing her almost forgotten legacy.

Miley Cyrus's disc is full of 80s-esque Roland DX-7 keyboard sounds and Synsonic claptrack beats. It sound exactly, and I mean exactly, like the soundtrack to any and all of that era's late teen and 20-something shopping mall, hormone movies directed by John Hughes. If you like the music from such movies as *Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, and *Weird Science*, or anything that starred Molly Ringwald or Rob Lowe, you'll love the *Breakout* CD. I guarantee it.

The disc is retro-future nostalgia at its highest form. However, this does

not take away from the album's enjoyability one iota. The production of the record is first rate, clever as hell, and always catches the listener off guard. Just when you think it's another piece of pre-fab, assembly-line junk, it surprises you with delicate minor chords, fade-outs, chattering guitars, bits of found sound weirdness here and there and unexpected double choruses.

Just like the 80s, the disc is kind of cool, kind of dumb and kind of fun all at the same time. Her cover of Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" is a testimony to her 80s roots. Outstanding CD tracks include the whiz-bang "Full Circle," "Breakout," and "Fly on the Wall."

Miley Cyrus has business connections to the Disney corporation as she currently plays in the U.S. Television series, Hannah Montana. Her first CD, released in 2007 contained several songs which are showcased in her program. This situation makes perfect sense if you consider that life in America has three distinct cinematic phases and soundtracks.

One is born into a Disneyfied world full of televised happy mice and smiling cartoon people. Disney, conveniently, also offers us the sound track to their films, which are always happy as a day at the beach. In their films bad guys always get slammed, good guys win in the end and that's the end of it.

The second phase of life and its soundtrack is the John Huges phase. Goofy but kind-hearted teens and absent-minded but well-intended adults get into weird and strenuous situations and get out of them by basic good will, mild cunning, and the grace of God. This is where 21st century Miley Cyrus comes into play. She is the current equivalent of 80s John Hughes soundtrack sirens such as Patti Smythe, Pat Benatar, Dale Bozzio and Toni Basil. She's simultaneously sexy and innocent; a stepping stone from Snow White and Ariel the mermaid to such types as brat-pack actresses like Ally Sheedy and Demi Moore.

The third and final phase is the inevitable strangeness of real world adulthood which is perfectly illustrated in the the subconscious strugglings found in director David Lynch's films. Add a metal-shredding Rob Zombie soundtrack to Lynch's singular vision of life and you have the trilogy of film-types and aural landscapes which incorporate the American experience. Miley Cyrus is a fine example of the second phase of fun before the bizarreness and ugliness of the work-machine really kicks-in. Get it and enjoy it while you can. Then go rent The Breakfast Club at your local video store and tell me that I'm wrong in my opinion. I'm awaiting your response.

Paul Gilbert
An Club, Athens
October 20, 2008
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Paul Gilbert does not look like and amphetamine-based, way-super-flashy LA speed-metal guitarist; but baby, he sure plays like one. The former guitarist for cult phenomenon metalistas Racer X now looks more like Neil Young during his early 80s Trans and Re-Actor period. He mounts the stage sporting carelessly tousled, shoulder-length tresses, long spidery sideburns and huge roll and tuck cushioned, studio-engineer head phones. Every electric guitar devotee in the city was wedged into An club to hear his 4-piece band. Gilbert did not disappoint the crowd and played speed-of-light solos and work from his new CD Silence Followed by a Deafening Roar. He also showcased older solo material and Racer X pieces. The 90% male, thirty-something crowd was ecstatic with all songs presented to them, proven by the fact that many patrons were playing vicious air-guitar along with Gilbert and neck-bopping along with his endlessly melodic improvisations.

Gilbert is a crafty guitarist as he knows how much he can get away with and not become monotonous when presenting his material. His all-instrumental set would get samey very quickly without this tasteful use of effects such as flangers, delays and e-bows. He mixes these effects nicely with straight-up rock riffing and low-end dampened chords to create a sophisticated hard rock sound like later period Frank Zappa and Steve Vai. He also incorporates string-tapping and pizzicato plucking into his pieces like late 70s/early 80s Eddie Van Halen.

If there's a weak point to Gilbert's work it would be the absence of a memorable riff or short melody to work his mind-boggling solos around. There nothing hummable or indelably imprintable on one's brain such as The Venture's "Walk, Don't Run," The Chantay's "Pipeline," or Link Wray's "Rumble," to hook and galvanize the audience to his work.

Highlights of his set included "Gargoyle," "Jackhammer," and new pieces "I Cannot Tell a Lie," and "Norwegian Cowbell." If you like metal guitar soloing in the extreme, a la Joe Satriani and Dream Theater's John Petrucci, look no further than Paul Gilbert for your listening pleasure. Many songs

sound like broken fan belts flapping madly around on high RPM cam shafts. Improvisations arrive with the speed of tracer bullets. Drums pound and basses ping and throb simultaneously. His songs either inspire total worship for his talent and craftsmanship or listener catatonia from sonic assault. It's high-end stuff for a specialized crowd. If you like your guitar music coming at you fast and hard, you're in for a treat with Paul Gilbert.