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Hi guys-

Here's the Thievery Corporation review. Shake, shake, shake...  
Talk soon, yr pal, Pp

Thievery Corporation  
Theatro Brahon  
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The multi/pan/cross cultural musical performing group Thievery Corporation is a hard act to pigeon hole. During their performance on stage there appeared to be an endless number of revolving singers, taking turns at the center microphone. Multi-instrumentalists played percussion and string instruments from every corner of the planet and all members of the group, including djs, were in constant motion. Thematically and stylistically, for lack of a better categorical term, Theivery Corporation play globally-flavored dance music. There are no power ballads, odes, torch songs, laments or blues involved in their output. What comes across to the listener are perfectly crafted pieces combining latin, reggae, disco, electronic and go-go music with eastern garnishes of sitar and sampled sounds from many other non-western musical instruments.

Their show at Brahon theater on Saturday was impressive to watch and groovier to listen to than I'm capable of describing to you. There were so many representative people and instruments from so many places doing so many thing on stage that it was difficult to keep your eye stationary on something from more than a few seconds. South American Pat Benatar clones would sing one piece and then be replaced by reggae cats wearing safari helmets. Sitar players morphed into guys slinging Les Pauls and Stratocasters. Percussionists who look like Whoopi Goldberg played Timbalas, maracas, bongoes, mounted Roland electronic tom-toms and many other things that I have no clue what they were, but they all made cooler-than-Jesus rhythmic-beat sounds that never seemed out of place in the presented pieces. After some time of watching this great fun and dazzling union of world music I began to ask myself "what is the point behind all this stuff? What's their game? What are they trying to prove to me?" The more I thought about it, the harder I watched the show, looking for clues about a possible mission statement from the Thievery Corporation.

The crowd, and me, were dancing our asses off to the low-end throbs, sound drops, sequenced chant-loops and digitally reproduced twang-oid string instrument presentation. Finally I began to get an idea of what was the ideological thrust behind the the band. Stage configuration was the clue I was looking for. The Velvet Underground and The Who were famous bands who always were aware and dealing with the issue of instrument hierarchy. Lou Reed stated that the Velvet Underground was a band with no hierarchy of instruments. The bass was as important as the voice; guitars were on a equal plane with percussion, etc. On their album *White Light/White Heat* this concept comes through perfectly. Its a great amphetamine

roar that is infinitely listenable because the ear can wander anywhere and connect with anything while simultaneously missing nothing.

The Who, during their *Who Sell Out* period placed Keith Moon's massive drum kit not in the rear of the stage, but on an even plane with the vocal microphone, bass and guitar. Theivery Corporation appear to have a different twist on idea about the ranking of instruments in the band.

The center microphone is the focal point, as vocals remain the primary driver of their songs. Percussion and string instruments flank the mike on its right and left. However the dj consoles loom over the stage like pulpits for the high priests of electronica. As the show romped through pieces like Chuck Brown's "Bustin' Loose" and new song "Hare Krishna," the group's collective identity became clear.

Their moniker isn't just a cute interpretation of taking every style of music and making electronic, dance-oriented, tutti-frutti dj mixes, but also, it has roots in the the areas of social casting, cyber-crime, and white collar corporate larceny and graft. Digital sampling and dubbing is the heart and soul of the band. The genuine, manually played instruments are, for the most part, garnishes and window dressing for the massive electronic throbbing and found sound broadcasting of the djs. Technology obviously rules the show here as presented by the lofty perches of the djs. They loom above the stage separating, in a metaphorical sense, the high clergy from the non-electronic laity. In a sense, separating the sacred from the profane, the classical from the romantic, the pre-scientific from the enlightenment.

Digital sampling isn't only theft from a real instrument, and theft from our organic senses, but theft in the commercial sense of the word. Musicians who were once used to create these sounds with their hands and feeling and talent are now replaced, or at least greatly augmented by, microchip technology and digital sequencing. Ergo, technology is as valuable and marketable as a human talent.

Theivery Corporation combine all elements of theft to create its musical work. They steal with technology and create with technology and technology is what brings the whole mess together: global communication, international transportation, intercontinental business, world art, social and hard sciences, and just about anything else you can think of. To quote Barry Andrews of the 80s band Shriekback, "everything that rises must converge." Technology makes that high convergence of global goods and services possible.

The sold-out crowd gobbled up every synthetic and organic pulse of the evenings show and appeared well-sated with with the big presentation given by Thievery Corporation. If the future of music and mankind in general is inextricably linked to silicon chips and computer programming, maybe it's not such a bad thing after all. On one side of the equation you've got cyber missile defense systems ready to blow-up everything in humanity, but on the other side you've got guys like Thievery Corporation who make the world a lot more like the living mega-sized dance party that it's supposed to be, and that's just fine with me.