

A.P.C. reviews by The Analog Girl

Discovering new music is one of my favourite pastimes. So I was thrilled when I was approached to review 5 CDs from French label A.P.C. at Front Row Boutique. A.P.C. is primarily celebrated for its chic minimalist clothing line, and their music releases have somehow managed to project what its retail arm advocates. I selected 5 CDs based purely on aesthetics, as I had no prior knowledge as to who these artists were and their individual musical directions.

I also wanted to explore something outside my musical territory. I am happy to report that I was pleasantly surprised and deeply intrigued by my wildest finds.

1 A.P.C. Dance: Ignore The Beat

Ignore The Beat is a dance record made A.P.C. style, by fusing various elements like funk and electro to create a killer dancefloor sound. Besides the radio edit of 'Ignore The Beat', this CD also contains various remixes of the same song, plus other tracks to get you in the groove.

2 Mami Chan: La Nuit De Pollen

Mami Chan, a Japanese musician now based in Paris, grabs whatever she can find - cheap synthesizers, melodica, toy pianos - and utilizes them creatively to come up with tunes that leave you

spellbound for days. I like to think of this album as music I would listen to when I am gardening in my backyard at night with fairy lights on. Gorgeous petite melodies creep out of my headphones to tease me with soaring innocent-sounding vocals. This puts a smile on my face instantly. Listening to this album brings me back to my days in Paris where I performed at the Cirque Electrique - simply magical. Hypnotic and gritty, my personal favourites for taking a spin on the merry-go-round with, are Tracks No. 2 'Driving Pillow' and No. 15 'Tombe A L'eau'.

3 Various Artists: The Unreleasable Tapes

Here is a rare find. A CD featuring bootlegs made by A.P.C. label founder Jean Touitou to remember the good times he shared with his friends at the A.P.C. studio in Paris. Friends like Sofia Coppola, Anna Sui and Marc Jacobs contribute tracks to 'Profitable Market' - spitting out words like Public Enemy, Christian Slater and Superconductor randomly. Music tapes don't get much cooler than this! On the whole, this album is an eclectic bag of songs; kicking off with the reggae sounds of 'Jambalaya', later moving into the live sounding 'Money' that's a little art rock, and a soothing number interestingly titled 'Rice Cooker Blues' which seems fit for the dreamy Playstation videogame - Katamari Damacy in which you roll up everyday objects to kitschy pop tunes. This record is so fashionable you wish you could wear music.

4 Havana Mood 2CD: Original and Dub

Right from the first play, I was transported to a very different place; somewhere very relaxed, almost festive and completely unreal. I have never been to the Caribbean but this record does the trick. It is described by A.P.C. as "masterpieces of Cuban 'Son' with the Septeto Nacional and Tata Guines", a genre yet to surface on The Analog Girl's playlist. Even so, I was attracted to a special something found in this 2CD set - a second disc that's a dub version of

the original, otherwise delightfully known as Rhum & Bass, arranged by A.P.C.'s Jean Touitou himself and Bill Laswell. This addition gives Havana Mood an edge with standout tracks like 'Rythm Impro Dub' and 'La Mujer De Antonio (Soundcheck Dub)'. So if you are looking for a good time, this will most spin your clock.

5 Listen To This Picture. Photo book + CD

The concept is simple - take photos of 12 women listening to their favourite song. Hence the title Listen To This Picture. Understated Brilliance. There is Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth listening to 'Feminina' by Joyce; Sofia Coppola listening to 'Honeymoon' by Phoenix; Kate Moss listening to 'Heart Of Glass' by Blondie; Debbie Harry of Blondie listening to 'I Put A Spell On You' by Nina Simone; and Marianne Faithfull listening to her own 'The Pleasure Song'. Accompanying these photographs are handwritten notes and scribbles. The book also comes with a CD containing all the songs that they were listening to. Extremely intimate, you can almost hear each song while looking at these photos, that reflects the delightful audible influence on each woman. So you can play them in your stereo and immerse yourself in the same sonic experience. This is the picture of music. And it is so beautiful.

All A.P.C. CDs available at Front Row.

