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Melissa Etheridge Breakdown

BLONDIE Live

Tina Turner Twenty Four Seven

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David Bowie 'hours...'

Foo Fighters There Is Nothing Left to Lose

The Clash From Here to Eternity

Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band Live On

Counting Crows This Desert Life

Paula Cole Amen



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Various Artists
At Home with the Groovebox
Grand Royal

CURRENT RATING:




In Annie Proulx's novel *Accordion Crimes*, an accordion brings horrific luck and death to whoever inherits it. By contrast, the Roland MC-505 Groovebox, which relies on sampling technologies, has inspired a great variety of cheer and creativity as it migrated amongst the many musicians on *At Home with the Groovebox*. What's most intriguing about this exercise is how the artists - whose tracks were limited by their exclusive reliance on this technology - each put a singular spin on this compact electronic "band in a box."

The Groovebox proves that beats are like fingerprints. Even when computerized, the unique stamp of each artist's sound makes its mark. Air's sexy clouds of sound pulsate through "Planet Vega." Pavement's scratchy tumble of electronic drums reinforces Stephen Malkmus's angst-turned-sarcasm on the rap "Robyn Turns 26." Beck's kitsch shimmers in his playful use of "Rock It"-like percussion on "Boyz." Sonic Youth's avant-garde seriousness crackles its way through "Campfire." Cibo Matto's hipster cuteness pokes its head out on the child's-toy beat of "We Love Our Lawyers." Will Oldham a.k.a. Bonnie "Prince" Billy's deadpan observations float over the disembodied rhythmic textures of "Today I Started Celebrating Again."


Other contributors include electronic music progenitor Jean Jaques Perrey, Japanese electronic-popsters Buffalo Daughter, post-rocker John McEntire, the Moog master Dick Hyman, DIY electronic soul man/Beasties' sideman Money Mark, the Brazillian-inflected and saccharine Sean Lennon. Each one of these varied artists takes the Groovebox in a distinctive direction, proving that there is indeed a lot of room inside a computer for human expression. These musicians don't rage against the machine, they play it for all its worth.

MICHAEL KRAMER

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MINDBLOWING!



ESSENTIAL



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