

renewed vitality of the traditional music industry, but to the fact that there will never be another Bob Dylan. If artists wish to earn a living making music these days, they would be wise to model themselves, not after Dylan or the Rolling Stones, but the Melvins, who have grasped better than almost anyone the importance of renewing one's base, rather than wasting energy in pursuit of new customers. Musicians may not be able to escape the reach of global capitalism, but at least they can have some measure of control over the means of production and, just as significantly, reproduction. It sure beats spending one's days in a cubicle earning money for a multinational corporation. ■

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## [MUSIC]

# Capsule Reviews



**MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE**, by Kode9 + the Spaceape.

*Hyperdub*, 2006.

TONY BLAIR'S final year in office is concluding on a rather ironic note. In October, Labor MP Jack Straw generated a huge outcry amongst the country's South Asian and Arab communities by starting a campaign to ban the wearing of headscarves in British public schools. In November, the domestic intelligence service issued a report documenting a severe rise in domestic terrorist organizing, announcing that it would be a generation before the problem was solved. And, following the government's passage of legislation limiting immigration, a court acquitted the leader of the racist British National Party on charges of incitement against minorities. What a far cry from a Prime Minister who once celebrated the multicultural character of British society by calling *chicken tikka masala* his country's new national dish.

Like the United States, the U.K. has been short on musical reactions to the War on Terror. In keeping with American productions like *Fahrenheit 9/11*, the most profound British responses to the conflict have primarily been cinematic, such as *28 Days Later*, a *Night of the Living Dead*-style take on how fear brings out the worst in people. It was only with the October 2006 release of Kode9 + the Spaceape's appropriately titled *Memories of the Future* that the U.K.'s electronic music community issued forth what might very well be the most aesthetically profound response to the country's deteriorating political environment, which, like *28 Days Later*, is characterized by solemnity, darkness, and most importantly, paranoia.

One of the very first full-length recordings to come out of the U.K.'s extremely fertile dubstep scene, *Memories of the Future* makes a remarkable political statement by thoroughly replicating the feelings of depression and anxiety suffered by England's minority communities. Referencing the intonation of Linton Kwesi Johnson's 1980s dub poetry with the apocalyptic fantasies of science fiction novelist Phillip K. Dick, vocalist Spaceape invokes, in the deepest of West Indian accents, hushed images of a destroyed future, firmly rooted in the present. Dispensing with spare synthesizer washes and languidly paced microbeats, Kode9's backing tracks follow suit, faithfully replicating the rhythms of a country descending slowly but surely into protracted ethnic conflict. —Joel Schalit



**ECHOES OF THE PAST**, by Dead Moon. *Sub Pop*, 2006.

IN THE EARLY '90S, punk bands from the Pacific Northwest were championed as the saviors of American culture. Given the mainstream commercial success of Seattle-based Nirvana's 1991 *Nevermind* LP, it was hard to argue that this wasn't true. For the first time since the 1982 release

of The Clash's *Combat Rock* album, a record representing serious countercultural ideals was being consumed en masse by American youth. And, for a few all-too short years, there remained open a window large enough to push through regionally nurtured punk subgenres such as riotgrrrrl, which introduced feminism and queer politics to an entire generation.

As tempting as it may be to read the title of Dead Moon's double CD anthology as a statement on the dated quality of its work (Dead Moon formed at the same time as Nirvana), *Echoes of the Past* is by no means a nostalgia trip. Though they may be the only remaining Northwest group from this period to continue to artistically thrive, *Echoes of the Past* is as much a statement of the continued health and vitality of the ideological underpinnings of late eighties Northwest punk as it is a career retrospective of a near twenty-year-old band.

Like all influential artists of Dead Moon's stature, the proof lies not so much in its music as the image projected by the band's members, and how they've chosen to practice their craft. Led by the husband-wife team of Fred and Toddy Cole (both of whom are fifty-eight years of age) and forty-five-year-old drummer Andrew Loomis, Dead Moon play vintage sixties garage punk as though they'd just discovered it, only recording their albums in mono, singing songs about love, personal failings and sometimes even politics, without succumbing to tiresome didactics or time-worn romantic clichés.

Within these facets of the band's persona live many of the same things that have always compelled punk music to lay an abstract cultural claim to social power: the irrelevance of age—the rejection of the notion that it somehow limits an individual's capacity for expression and creativity, the embrace of sentimentality, and the ability to openly express anger. If that's what growing older means, I'm all for it. In the meantime I'm re-titling my copy of this record *Echoes of the Future*. —J.S. ■