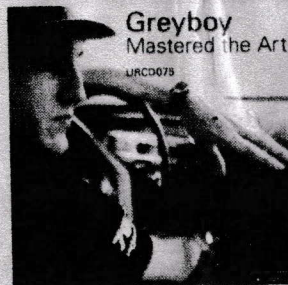


downtempo pack, painting broad soundstrokes over her hip-hop, dub, and European drum-and-bass (think Kruder & Dorfmeister) rhythms. The result is a cool, modern record full of beats, cuts, samples and loops produced and programmed in such a familiar, almost poppy style that it could very easily (but probably won't) be dug by people who don't listen to *Morning Becomes Eclectic*. Tre Hardson (of LA hip-hoppers the Pharcyde) launches the album with some idealistic positivity on "Make It Better," yet while his words uplift in their own simple way, it's the Angel's music that enhances them, crouching and leaping to some wonderful peaks. When soft-voiced Mystic sings over the tracks "Baltimore" and "Destiny," it calls to mind Massive Attack or the tons of potential Morcheeba never lived up to. "Strange Times" does ambient dub as effectively and subtly as the Orb do at their best, bubbling into a shimmering, psychedelic calm. Mostly, *No Gravity* is unobtrusive but groovy, slick but not stupid, and, to quote the immortal words of Flava Flav, "Cold chillin' in effect." (Michael Coyle)

**GREYBOY  
MASTERED THE ART  
UBIQUITY**

If Mexican DJ collective Nortec is the future sound of Tijuana, then San Diego's Greyboy is the future sound of Southern California hipsters. Greyboy (Andreas Stevens on his birth certificate) spins a film noir mix of hip-hop, Latin-groove vibraphones and acoustic guitars packed with a tough, streetwise punch,



Greyboy  
Mastered the Art  
URCD075

**PUPPETS OF CASTRO  
PUPPETS OF CASTRO  
TROUGH RECORDS**

I change my mind about this album every time I listen to it. At first, the songs seemed good but didn't flow together and were too poppy, and those sung by Andrew Lorand sounded annoyingly like They Might Be Giants. But I'm a longtime fan of the Puppets' other singer, Matthew Niblock, so I kept listening, and subsequent go-rounds revealed a lot of depth. There's "Mr. Smith," a gentle rebuke of fire-and-brimstone evangelism done up in a light gospel style. There's the melancholy "Extraordinary Things," written in the persona of an elderly man reflecting on his accomplishments and failures and the dreams that drove them. It's an achingly beautiful, delicate song, though it gets easily lost following a wacky novelty number like "Girls Like That," about failing to impress the hot chicks who hang out at the Blue Cafe. So about 20 listens in, I can confidently say I enjoy this CD, at least as witty, intelligent pop. But with one caveat: I can't accept that a record with the cool title of *Puppets of Castro* doesn't take at least one quiet, reflective moment to investigate the capitalist-imperialist dogs running around Washington, D.C. Where's the anarchy? Where's the politics? Where's the friggin' revolution? (Victor D. Infante)



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