

Eclectic Emoting

TRIP-POP FOR THE MASSES, A FRENCH CLASSIC, COMPILATIONS, AND SOME ESPAÑOL

X-Tra Danceable

Sneaker Pimps • *Becoming X* (Virgin)



From the opening electronic hiccups of this album, the “trip-hop” tag may jump out of your little book of musical categories, but *Becoming X*, an ambiguous title hinting at the difficulties within, doesn’t just tag along to the sinuous sounds flowing our way from

Britain; it sets new precedents. The Sneaker Pimps’ debut is laced with sarcasm sung in girlish tones, mischievous grooves, and deliciously cynical slants, thanks to the sum of its parts: Kelli Dayton’s vocals, Chris Corner’s guitar work, and Liam Howe’s stylistic keyboards. The album is a divine array of contrasts; usually naughty, and often danceable. Taking their cue from the dank skies of England, the Pimps offer unsettling anecdotes of pathos, prophecy, and paranoia.

The first track, “Low Place Like Home,” sets the tone: “read your future in a magazine/tells you what to lose/hope you find yourself.” Here, frustration manifests itself in a gorgeous backbeat and compact riff. The album’s most com-

PELLING TRACK, “6 Underground,” is a figurative tale about being buried alive. By teasing with duality not unlike that

of Garbage’s Shirley Manson, this song shines. (Ace producer Nellee Hooper took note, remixing it for a deeper rendition.) With

buzz abounding, the Sneaker Pimps will surely benefit from

the Trickys and Moorcheebas who came before,

but with this infectious premiere, they prove

on their own terms that the best way to

brace for the ambivalence of the new

millennium is to dance.

—Rebecca Kraus

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