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Marshall O Boy and the Well Hungarians

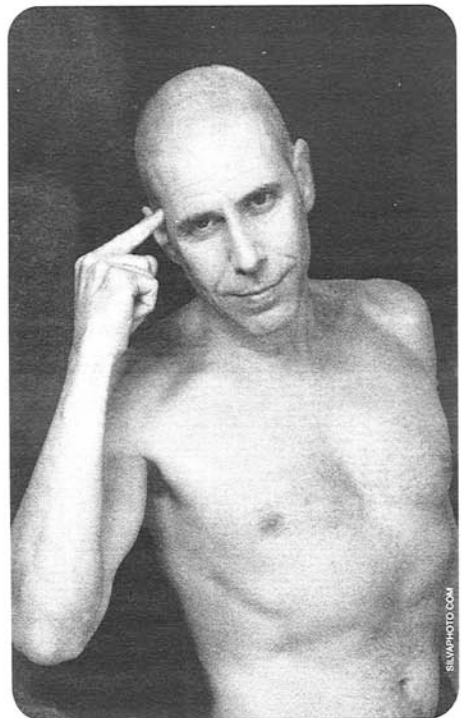
Cover Your Ass

(Self-released)

When he isn't hosting some of Los Angeles' raunchiest safer-sex orgies through his notoriously sex-radical organization, the O Boys, Marshall O Boy is the front man for the Well Hungarians, a (surprise!) sex-radical rock group that claims punk as a major influence and likes to sing songs about (more surprise!) sex. While their playful insistence on promoting sex-positive messages through their music is admirable, the Well Hungarians' political message has often been lost in songs that eschew melody and hook in favor of anarchy and noise. That isn't the case on their latest release, a collection of cover tunes of songs by some of rock's most notorious and/or sexually ambiguous performers. On this 10-song disc, what was once missing (a unique sense of identity and consistency as musicians) is now front-and-center as the band tears through everything from the gender-bending fun of Imperial Drag's "Boy or a Girl" (dedicated to "the ladies of Dragstrip") to the bouncy vibrancy of the Dandy Warhols' "Get Off," right up through to the acoustic richness of David Bowie's "Rock 'N' Roll Suicide." In many ways, it's as if this is an entirely different band than the one that recorded 2001's lackluster "Jesus Christ Porno Star." The playing is less crude, more consistent. As a singer, O Boy has matured. His vocals simply shine on just about every song here, most notably "Boy or a Girl" and Ian McCulloch's "Kansas." There are a couple of missteps, however; the band's dreary interpretation of Depeche Mode's "Enjoy the Silence" is a bit too goth for its own good, while their take on Green Day's "Basket Case" is even more whiny and melodramatic than the original. As original songwriters, the Well Hungarians are a ragged outfit that has a hard time finding its own rhythm, but as a cover band, they are a radical bunch of randy rockers who are right on the money shot.

—K.K.

(For information on how to get the CD, see www.oboys.org.)



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