

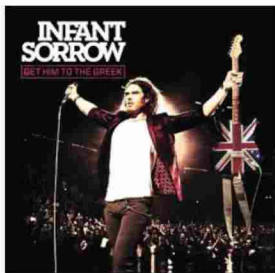
MUSIC: NEW RELEASES By Chuck Campbell

Soundtrack barely prompts a chuckle

Good music is hard, good comedy is harder. Unfortunately, there's little of either on Infant Sorrow's "Get Him to the Greek."

Infant Sorrow is a fictional band led by the fictional character Aldous Snow, played by comedian/actor Russell Brand. Snow was a scene-stealer in the Nicholas Stoller-directed/Jason Segel-written 2008 film "Forgetting Sarah Marshall," so it's understandable Stoller and Segel (who also starred in "Sarah Marshall") would want to resurrect the character to be the central figure in the new "Get Him to the Greek."

The Infant Sorrow release doubles as the movie's soundtrack, and it's a flat, pale parody of British rock that builds entire songs around a solitary joke — squeezing the life out of "Going Up" to hammer home the punch line, "The world ain't going to catch me going down," listlessly imitating an arena ballad to explain the sex and drug initials of "F.O.H.," humorlessly flirting with



'GET HIM TO THE GREEK'

■ Infant Sorrow (Universal Republic)

■ Rating: ★★

statutory rape on "Little Bird" ...

Brand sings with a one-note air of detached self-importance that wears thin. The music might echo everyone from Modern English to Oasis, but it's always second-rate. And although "Riding Daphne" rides a catchy refrain, "Yeah Yeah Oi Oi" is an infectious chant-along, and "African Child (Trapped in Me)" succeeds with an absurd premise, the release isn't bombastic enough or hooky enough. Or funny enough.

There's a jarring — and thoroughly refreshing — twist at the end of the release

with the introduction of Rose Byrne as electronica vocalist Jackie Q, first in a duet with Aldous Snow on "Supertight" and then solo on the album-closing "Ring 'Round," an uproariously raunchy cut that almost single-handedly redeems the soundtrack.

Given what they did here to Aldous Snow, let's hope Stoller and Segel don't make Jackie Q the central character of their next film.

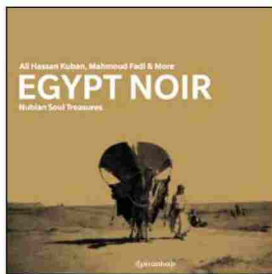
'Egypt Noir': Learn while you churn

There are cultural lessons packed into "Egypt Noir: Nubian Soul Treasures," but its educational relevance shouldn't scare away those looking for entertainment. Because the release is an unconventional good time, regardless of a listener's knowledge of history or Arabic and Nubian languages.

"Egypt Noir" ("black Egypt") generally exemplifies the assimilation of descendants of the ancient Nubia empire into modern Egypt, and the compilation loosely shows how Nubian/Egyptian music has further been Westernized into a contemporary style that could be played anywhere yet still

maintains ties to its roots.

The late Ali Hassan Kuban, who is credited for updating the Nubian sound by marrying "village music" to the likes of saxophone, is featured on two tracks — "Gammal" and "Bettitogor Agil." On the former, his voice plays off the vocals of Salwa Abou Greisha as they weave



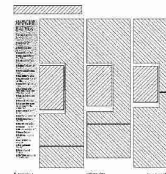
'EGYPT NOIR: NUBIAN SOUL TREASURES'

■ Various acts (Piranha)

■ Rating: ★★★★★

through gorgeous, mesmerizing melodies, and on the latter he stands tall through sweeping, infectious refrains. Both tracks are tethered to incredibly vigorous rhythms.

In fact, the energy of "Egypt Noir" is



nearly as relentless as that of just about any current dance, pop or hip-hop product; it's simply more organic, driven by all manner of drums and percussion. Also, although the arrangements fluctuate from the primal (Fathi Abou Greisha's "Hager") and the subdued (Abou Saleh's "El Zekra") to the electrified (Salma's "Yanas Baridouh") and the complex (Hassan Abdel Aziz's "Elleya Misafir"), the vocals are consistently dramatic — sometimes overly acrobatic or too croonerish, but never without soul.

Ultimately, this stirring cultural mash-up sounds both otherworldly and grounded.

Hybrid diversifies with new singer

Hybrid's "Disappear" is cinematic — appropriate, because its familiar sound makes it seem like a sequel.

At least it's one of those sequels that's on par with the original.

The electronic-based act from Swansea, Wales, is edging off the dance floor with its fourth release. The duo of Chris Healings and Mike Truman brought aboard a third member, vocalist Charlotte James, to add texture and soul to mix that also includes strings from the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. Not that there aren't danceable songs here: The plunge-and-suck cadence of



'DISAPPEAR HERE'

■ Hybrid (Distinctive)

■ Rating: ★★★

"Every Word" is irresistible, even as it leans on slide guitar and James' fetching vocals to humanize the arrangement, and a careening rhythm drives the wobbly "Original Sin" to complement

her swagger ("All I wanna do is breathe you in").

"Disappear Here" isn't inane house music, it's

a collection of songs that tell stories, from the evocative darkness and churn of the full-bodied introductory track, "Empire," to the dramatic flurry of the mini-musical "Break My Soul" that features a ballad within the song.

"Can You Hear Me" comes grinding in — gaining lean muscle mass while James' voice emerges and vanishes in the vapor — and explodes into a minute of payoff before dissolving into the cosmos. Meanwhile, the title track drifts out as a languid electronic lounge song before transitioning to something more urgent and emotional, and "Green Shell Suit" conjures a synthetic waterfall feeding into a rushing stream feeding into a massive underwater cave where James resides as something of a sea nymph.

Unfortunately, "Disappear Here" gets lost in déjà vu, the occasional use of lame male vocals and a bland farewell aptly titled "Numb." But the release is generally well-executed and a satisfying blend of film-style ambience and volatile electronics.