

'Crush'

Telepath (Telepath)

"Crush" is a world-music free-for-all jam bringing together an international band of musicians.

Key words: "jam band."

No matter how much enthusiasm Telepath's Michael Christie musters for his pieced-together hodgepodge of sound, the grooves take over almost every track and amble in that space where jam-band music tends to go — a mind-bending hypnotic place that warms the soul but doesn't stimulate the brain.

Not that "Crush" isn't engaging. Christie assembled e-mailed contributions from an international army of guest musicians and singers. Christie plays drums, bass, guitar, keyboards, flutes and more with others chipping in horns, sitars and violins mixed up with voices in multiple

languages — and sometimes no language at all, just wails and moans.

Western, Indian and Arabic signatures blend together in "Crush's" small world, sometimes tied to Caribbean rhythms and dub over-lays.

The messages tend to be generically upbeat, from Williamtell's hopeful soul on "Freedom" to "Justify's" vision of "No more leaders, (lying) and cheating" set to a forceful mash of reggae and hip-hop. And it doesn't get any better here than "Down the Block," a block-party-appropriate track built on "mandoguitar," trombone, sax, violin, a gripping groove and festive chants.

Yet the collection often slips into the anonymity of likable-enough songs heated by inviting rhythms, though lacking in distinction.

— Chuck Campbell,
 Scripps Howard
 News Service

