

COMICS WAITING ROOM

The COMICS WAITING ROOM is: Reviews, Essays, and Other Assorted Fun From Marc Mason



THE LOOKING GLASS WARS SOUNDTRACK

Performed by Various

Available From Automatic Records

You have to give author/producer Frank Beddor credit: the man knows how to cross-promote material. His novel, THE LOOKING GLASS WARS, came out in the U.K. last year, and in anticipation of the U.S. release, he put together a comicbook miniseries focusing on one of the characters that shipped from Image Comics. Now, he's worked with a number of bands to put together a soundtrack meant to complement the novel, both thematically and as background sound for the reader while they page through the book.



The biggest risk Beddor was facing when putting together this project had to be the potential for it to turn out horribly cheesy. Finding the right bands and right songs was a must; a disc full of crappy-sounding John Tesh-ish music would have been a nightmare. But while the album does get off to a bit of a soft

electronica start, it quickly kicks into gear. Singers like Julianna Raye offer knockout songs that evoke the best of artists like Natalie Merchant and 10000 Maniacs, and then alt-rock Hypnogaja swoops in behind them to offer solid work that reminds the ear of bands like My Chemical Romance. So the track listing does an excellent job of avoiding obvious pitfalls.

There aren't a lot of extra frills, though Beddor does provide a synopsis of his world in the liner notes that matches up the songs with their portion of the plot, but they don't really turn out to be necessary. Over the past few years, there have been a few comics that have tried this approach, adding a music soundtrack (Brian Wood's *POUNDED* comes to mind, as does Tracker's soundtrack to Craig Thompson's *BLANKETS*) but none of them has quite clicked with the original material the way this one does. You don't need to have read the book to enjoy it, and that makes a huge difference.

Marc Mason