

Garbage - Absolute Garbage (2007)

Written by bluesever

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Disc 1

1. "Vow" – 4:32
2. "Queer" – 4:37
3. "Only Happy When It Rains" – 3:47
4. "Stupid Girl" (Garbage, Strummer, Jones) – 4:18
5. "Milk" – 3:50
6. "#1 Crush" (Nellee Hooper Remix) – 4:45
7. "Push It" – 4:03
8. "I Think I'm Paranoid" – 3:39
9. "Special" – 3:47
10. "When I Grow Up" – 3:24
11. "You Look So Fine" – 5:22
12. "The World Is Not Enough" (Don Black/David Arnold) – 3:58
13. "Cherry Lips (Go Baby Go!)" – 3:13
14. "Shut Your Mouth" – 3:27
15. "Why Do You Love Me" – 3:53
16. "Bleed Like Me" – 4:01
17. "Tell Me Where It Hurts" – 4:10
18. "It's All Over but the Crying" (Remix) – 3:49

Disc 2: Remixes

1. "The World Is Not Enough" (UNKLE remix) – 5:01
2. "When I Grow Up" (Jagz Kooner Remix) – 5:23
3. "Special" (Brothers in Rhythm Remix) – 5:15
4. "Breaking Up the Girl" (Timo Maas Remix) – 5:19
5. "Milk" (Massive Attack Remix) – 4:31
6. "Cherry Lips" (Roger Sanchez Remix) – 5:01
7. "Androgyny" (Felix da Housecat Remix) – 5:29
8. "Queer" (Rabbit in the Moon Remix) – 5:04
9. "I Think I'm Paranoid" (Crystal Method Remix) – 4:25
10. "Stupid Girl" (Todd Terry Remix) – 3:47
11. "You Look So Fine" (Fun Lovin' Criminals Remix) – 3:38

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12. *"Push It" (Boom Boom Satellites Remix) – 5:22*

13. *"Bad Boyfriend" (Garbage Remix) – 5:04*

Looking back, there is no band that sums up all the myriad '90s trends better than Garbage. They were led by alt-rock superproducer Butch Vig, the man responsible for the production on Nirvana's *Nevermind*, but he also helmed classics of the era for Sonic Youth, Smashing Pumpkins, and L7. They were a rock band that indulged in noise and rode a hard backbeat but they were about fluid textures -- a move they learned from shoegazers like My Bloody Valentine and Curve -- so they could ease into trip-hop when rockers started flirting with electronica. They were fronted by Shirley Manson, giving them an entryway not only to the countless Women in Rock pieces, but her Scottish heritage also gave Garbage a tenuous U.K. connection in the days of Brit-pop. They brushed against so many touchstones that they couldn't help but seem a little bit prefabricated, but their music was done with the sharp, crass calculation of a bunch of old studio pros and a singer who had been kicking around since the mid-'80s, when she was in British indie also-rans Goodbye Mr. Mackenzie. Garbage knew how to make records that sounded good and sounded like the times, so when they had their big break they knew how to stay on the charts. And they did, riding the post-grunge wave into the 2000s with albums that charted progressively higher, but not longer, than each previous record, while each new single showed up on many different charts without staying around on the radio as long as those first few hits from their eponymous 1995 debut. In other words, like lots of post-grunge alt-rock bands, they wound up being a one-album wonder with a couple of almost-hits to their credit after the first blockbuster, as the 2007 compilation *Absolute Garbage* makes clear. Spanning an overly generous 18 tracks -- supplemented on the Deluxe Edition in true '90s fashion with a 13-track bonus remix disc -- *Absolute Garbage* runs through all the U.S. radio hits and a good selection of international singles, skipping such latter-day singles as "Androgyny," "Breaking Up the Girl," "Run Baby Run," and "Sex Is Not the Enemy." By the time the compilation draws to its close nit-picking over such omissions seems pointless, since it already seems that the comp has lingered far longer than necessary on the last stage of Garbage's career, erasing the memories of sexy, hooky singles "Vow," "Queer," "Only Happy When It Rains," and "Stupid Girl," all arriving on the debut and all still sounding sleek and alluring. Which, of course, is kind of the story of their career: they made a big impact at first, but then their studio professionalism overtook their pop instincts. They were still often gripping at a sheer sonic level -- Shirley Manson was a compelling, dynamic performer and Vig and his cohorts surely could construct a fantastic-sounding record. A few more of those moments could have been captured here.

---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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