

## UNREST

### Imperial FFRR

(Guernica/all formats)

ONE ALARMING facet of this American guitar invasion is the way in which useless old punk rodents have suddenly had their 'careers' revitalised after a decade spent slogging around the circuit. Suddenly, it's almost cred to be crap. Frankly, the thought of playing Unrest filled your hack with dread: an anarchically-named combo, formed in 1983 in Washington, releasing their umpteenth long-player to a wondering world? Give us a break.

And, by gum, Unrest most certainly do give us the relaxing half hour that is so desperately needed in these nerdy, grunge-gripped times. 'Imperial FFRR' is the first release on Guernica, the 4AD offshoot which appears to want to seek out those 'tricky' old-timers and package them for a fresh market. It's also a profoundly bewildering experience, replete with air sirens, wine glass solos and crafty slices of sensuality.

Admittedly, "F—ing f—ing on sandy beaches," ('Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl') perhaps isn't the most subtle of sexual confessions, yet for the most part Unrest — led by one Mark Robinson — inhabit a delicate planet where oddity is as essential as a passport.

So there's the unhurried elegance of 'Imperial' to wallow within; there are stormtrooping guitars lighting up 'Firecracker' like a burning hamster; there are acoustic twiddles and sonic yells and more songs about death than sanity should permit, not forgetting tragedy, beauty and a slab of compelling charm.

Yeah, if we're talking about the perverse, then Unrest have a few more marbles to lose before they attain, say, Mercury Rev's stunned standards, but this is still an album packed with *stings* and roundabouts. And no, I wasn't lying about the wine glass solo . . . (7)

**Simon Williams**