

XYMOX

METAMORPHOSIS

(X-ULT)

I NEVER thought Xymox would turn into some kind of quasi-Shamen outfit. And that may be part of the problem.

Everyone *thinks* of Xymox as an archetypal 4AD band. Probably always will. But even if they were, then this new coat suits them beautifully. Resplendent, refreshing and relentless, Xymox's music is infused with a positivism that's for the first time made me nostalgic for the days of "Pacific State" and "Lightspan".

When "Awakenings" welds *all* the aforementioned components onto an ultraconventional pop arrangement, I'm faced with the bizarre but plausible notion that this might be in the proper, national Top 10 by spring. Not least because it's the best New Order song I've heard since "True Faith". There's something delightfully incongruous about a bunch of miserable Dutch people embracing equity culture four years too late: a bit like The Grim Reaper deciding to leave Hell in order to be in a band with Bill and Ted.

Most excellent.

PETER PAPHIDES