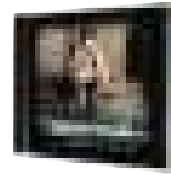
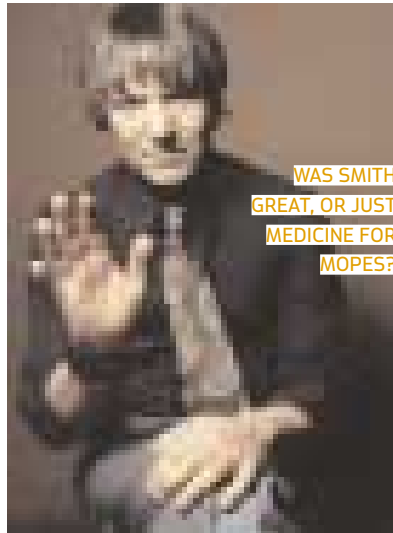


*THE SPLIT OPINION ELLIOTT SMITH



PRO

SENSITIVE singer-songwriters are as common as the dank bars they haunt. But Elliott Smith was no open-mike-night pope of mope. Over the course of six albums (including the new *from a basement on the hill*), Smith proved to be a brutally honest confessor, disguising his depression with lilting melodies and disarming humor. His message was simple: Life hurts, and some remedies—drugs, alcohol, *Revolver* on repeat—work better than others. And though Smith's lyrics were tough on the world (and himself), his swirling pop was so ecstatically gorgeous, it could make your heart actually ache. To his fans, Smith was like medicine, an all-too-human hero willing to put his heartbreaks, betrayals, and precious memories in a display case. And few museum pieces come with so many perfect imperfections.—CARYN GANZ



WAS SMITH GREAT, OR JUST MEDICINE FOR MOPES?

CON

LOOK, I DON'T hate Elliott Smith. But I've long felt he's overrated, and I feel that even more so, now that his tragic death has provoked best-of-his-generation worship. My problem with Smith is not what he did musically; he did a better Beatles impression than anyone else. Rather, I find fault with his words: Smith was a one-note depressive who, unable to clear certain creative and emotional barriers, sang the same sad song over and over again. He became a hero for people who liked flying kites in the windless sky. If you're into the Miserabilists, I think you'll be better challenged by folks like Nick Drake, Iron & Wine, and, of course, the Smiths, acts that understand misery as an ephemeral state, tinged by humor and even hope. A great sad record should make you want to climb down off a bridge, too.—HOWIE KAHN

REVIEW SMITH'S LAST ALBUM

Elliott Smith's *from a basement on the hill* isn't the best album he ever made—that would be 1998's majestic *XO*—but it thankfully lacks the iffy, for-fans-only stink that corrupts most posthumous work. Originally intended as a double album, *from a basement* was pared down to fifteen tracks that showcase Smith's tendencies, good and bad: ambitious melodies (“Coast to Coast”) and occasionally tiresome, woe-is-me lyrics (“Don't Go Down”). Much like Smith's live shows, *basement* is a bit shambling, but it's also undeniably beautiful, and a fitting good-bye.—B.R.

JESUS, DID YOU HEAR THE NEW WILCO?

UNHOLY EVENTS OCCUR WHEN WE PLAY WILCO'S *A GHOST IS BORN* WHILE WATCHING *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*

REMEMBER THE SPOOKY things that happened when you synced Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* to *The Wizard of Oz*? Well, hang on to your bongos, stoners, because we have a new combo for you: Wilco's *A Ghost Is Born* and *The Passion of the Christ*. Here's just a few of the coincidences **DAVID WALTERS** found after he began the record at the 00:01 mark and the movie at chapter one, with the screen showing the Icon Productions symbol.

5 minutes 53 seconds The song “Hell Is Chrome” begins on *A Ghost Is Born*. The song's first lines are *When the Devil came / He was not red / He was chrome*. At this precise moment in *The Passion*, Satan appears for the first time (and he's not red).

10:35 Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss in *The Passion*. Moments later, Wilco's Jeff Tweedy sings the lyric *Why can't they wish their kisses good?*

18:40 When a sympathetic Roman guard asks about Jesus's arrest, Tweedy sings, *There's no blood on my hands / I just do as I'm told*.

52:44 The extended beating scene in *The Passion* and the fifteen-minute Wilco “Less Than You Think” coincide perfectly.

1:13:58 After the Palm Sunday flashback in which Jesus is greeted warmly, Tweedy sings, *I was welcomed / With open arms / I received so much help in every way / I felt no fear* (at this point in the film, the CD is repeating).

1:49:51 Tweedy's lyric *I will always die / So you can remember me* on the song “Company in My Back” occurs exactly when Mary asks Jesus to let her die with him.



CHRIST AT GOLGOTHA, OR AS WE CALL IT, TRACK FIVE.

1:53:08 The earthquake that begins when Jesus finally dies in *The Passion* starts right when Tweedy screams on the song “I'm a Wheel.”

1:56:01 When Jesus is taken down from the cross and cradled by his supporters, Wilco plays “Theologians,” and Tweedy sings, ominously, *No one's ever gonna take my life from me / I lay it down / A ghost is born*.

OTHER SYNC COMBINATIONS TO EXPLORE: BRITNEY SPEARS'S 'IN THE ZONE' & 'THE FOG OF WAR'; CHOPIN'S '4 BALLADES' & 'WHITE CHICKS'