



Vic Chesnutt, Elf Power, And The Amorphous Strums

Dark Development

Orange Twin (OTR031)

What do you get when you team two somewhat skewed entities? If it happens to be tipsy troubadour Vic Chesnutt and the progressive-pop ensemble Elf Power, the results are certain to seem somewhat off-kilter. Even so, the pairing of the two produces an oddly enticing effect, songs that purvey an unlikely combination of hazy atmospherics and surprisingly reliable refrains.

Suffice it to say then that *Dark Development* is not as dire and dreary as its title might suggest — far from it in fact. Several songs are immediately infectious — the spunky “Little F**ker,” a soaring “And How,” the idyllic “We Are Mean” and the earnest “Phil The Fiddler” in particular — with compelling choruses and beautifully beguiling melodies creating an unexpected charm from oddball encounters. So while *Dark Developments* may take some getting used to, ultimately the music proves rather mesmerizing.

— Lee Zimmerman