

ear candy

THE ATHENS BLUR MAGAZINE

ISSUE 13 - JAN. 15, 2010

ALBUM
REVIEWS



Nick Cave & Warren Ellis

The Road

If I were to make a list of the coolest film soundtracks of the past decade, Nick Cave and Warren Ellis' scores for "The Proposition" and "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" would be near the top of it. After working together for over 15 years in the Bad Seeds and Dirty Three, the dynamic duo has honed an emotionally evocative sound perfectly suited for the big screen, and *The Road* marks yet another brilliant addition to their canon.

A gut-wrenching film adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "The Road" follows a man (Viggo Mortensen) and his young son (newcomer Kodi Smit-McPhee) as they make their way across a bleak, post-apocalyptic landscape destroyed by an unnamed cataclysm. Director John Hillcoat balances touching scenes of father-son bonding with terrifying sequences involving roving gangs and human cannibals, and the music treads similarly disparate emotional ground.

From the pastoral gentility of the opening "Home" and the haunting beauty of the title track to the discomfiting dissonance of "The Cannibals," Cave and Ellis adroitly tailor each song to suit the scene, yet never lose sight of a cohesive sound. Cave's piano, Ellis' violin and various woodwinds create moments of elegiac beauty, which only make the disturbing loops and frenetic percussion of the uptempo tracks all the more effective.

As with their previous soundtracks, you don't need to have seen the movie to enjoy this music. But if you have, the emotional impact of their compositions seems all the more impressive.

— *Bret Love*