



tricky and others.  
nearly god

Island Records

Ooh, this is a bit dark. This is Tricky's version of Frank Sinatra's Duets, except there's no toe-tapping singalongs going on, it's downright spooky. Tricky is one of the most inventive and experimental producers to come out of the UK in recent times and this album, released under the moniker of *Nearly God*, is aptly titled. It's meditative and ethereal at times, but also sinister and creepy. Even the cover art is eerily evocative, showing several shots of a pyjama-clad person crawling towards an ominous-looking door. And the typeface is bloody hard to read. The sounds combine spacious backing beats with carefully punctuating samples and the different vocals bring a highly emotive element to each song. Among the voices are a distorted Neneh Cherry, an angelic Björk, an aching Martina Tomley Bird, a bluesy Alison Moyet and a subdued Terry Hall. Tricky's own vocals cast appropriate shadows over the uncluttered arrangements. Definitely a late night album for quiet contemplation.

review by [Frances](#)

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beck.odelay

Geffen Records

What is it about the 90s? Nerds are cool. Sloppy clothes look good. Retro is all the rage. Counter-culture has become popular culture and [Beck's there to be our hero](#) - a fresh-faced dweeb with a kooky dress sense and a new record to match. *Odelay* is like a knickerbocker glory - a sweet, colourful pudding with layers of blues, folk, swinging 60s melodies, slinky 70s R 'n' B, 80s electro, 90s hip-hop, eastern sitar twangs and not forgetting the raunchy guitar. And over the top of all these familiar musical vignettes are Beck's tales of weirdness delivered in the cutest dulcet tones. Who knows what "got a devil's haircut in my mind..." means, but hell, it's easy to sing along to.

The 25-year-old must have fun finding the strangest, corniest records to pinch cool bits from, and like a good boy, he's credited many of them on the liner notes. You'll hear samples from everyone from Bob Dylan and James Brown to Bernie Purdie and Antonio Carlos Jobim. [The Dust Brothers](#) are at the producer's helm, which makes sense considering their past collaborations with the Beastie Boys and Tone Loc. Says Beck in Rolling Stone last year: "Weird is happening in the 90s. It's a genre. But the 90s are getting too weird, so in the last two years I've been heading toward normal. That's gonna be the next radical thing. Soon normalcy will be the edge." Beck's idea of normal is definitely a schizophrenic one. *Odelay* is a patchwork album that's not patchy.

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