

ALBUM REVIEW

Kim Gordon Puts Trump's Forbidden Lexicon to Her Lips



KIM GORDON
Play Me

★★★★★

/ MATADOR RECORDS / PLAYGROUND MUSIC
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After the dissolution of Sonic Youth and a lifetime spent in the slipstream of noise rock, Kim Gordon has unearthed something at once visceral, danceable, and strikingly contemporary.

BY NICOLAJ ROOS
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Kim Gordon is, above all, a survivor. As co-founder of Sonic Youth in 1981—alongside Thurston Moore, whom she would later marry—she helped sculpt a sound that came to define an entire epoch of post-punk abrasion and avant-garde guitar music. Their romantic and creative union was central to the band's mythology until its quiet unravelling in 2011, the same year Sonic Youth formally disbanded.

In the years since, Gordon has pursued a restless trajectory: solo excursions, interdisciplinary collaborations, and a parallel life as a visual artist, author, and occasional actor (with a cameo turn in *Gilmore Girls*). With this latest record, she continues that evolution—this time embracing a more corporeal, hip-hop-inflected idiom that feels less like reinvention than a logical extension of her long-standing appetite for disruption.

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Produced by Justin Raisen, the album is an austere collage of skeletal hip-hop, fractured breakbeats, and grimy, half-decayed samples. There's a kind of *heroin-chic* asceticism at play here—a pared-back candour that dovetails elegantly with Gordon's detached vocal presence.

"Play Me" opens with a slinking, funk-laced breakbeat evocative of '90s club culture. Gordon's delivery is disarmingly offhand, as though she's simply wandered into the studio mid-thought and begun to riff. Lyrics referencing Spotify playlist titles lend the track an arch, contemporary irony, while scratches and looping motifs imbue it with a sense of immediacy—almost as if the track is assembling itself in real time.

A more oblique turn arrives with "Black Out", where Gordon adopts a spoken-word cadence reminiscent of the cut-up techniques popularised by William S. Burroughs and later channelled by David Bowie. Minimalist rhythms and looping fragments coalesce into a hypnotic haze, conjuring visions of New York's downtown underground circa the early '80s.

Closing track "Byebye 25!" carries an almost oracular weight. Its lyrics incorporate terms drawn from Donald Trump's infamous *banned words* list, lending the piece a serrated political edge. It feels like a farewell to an era—both personal and societal—delivered with Gordon's trademark wry detachment intact.

The remainder of the record adheres to this same blueprint: terse, incisive compositions that rarely breach the three-minute mark. Gordon has crafted an album that is as tactile as it is cerebral. Yet therein lies its limitation: the persistent reliance on a singular hip-hop template begins to chafe. For all its immediacy and allure, one can't help but feel that a broader palette might have elevated it from compelling to truly transcendent.



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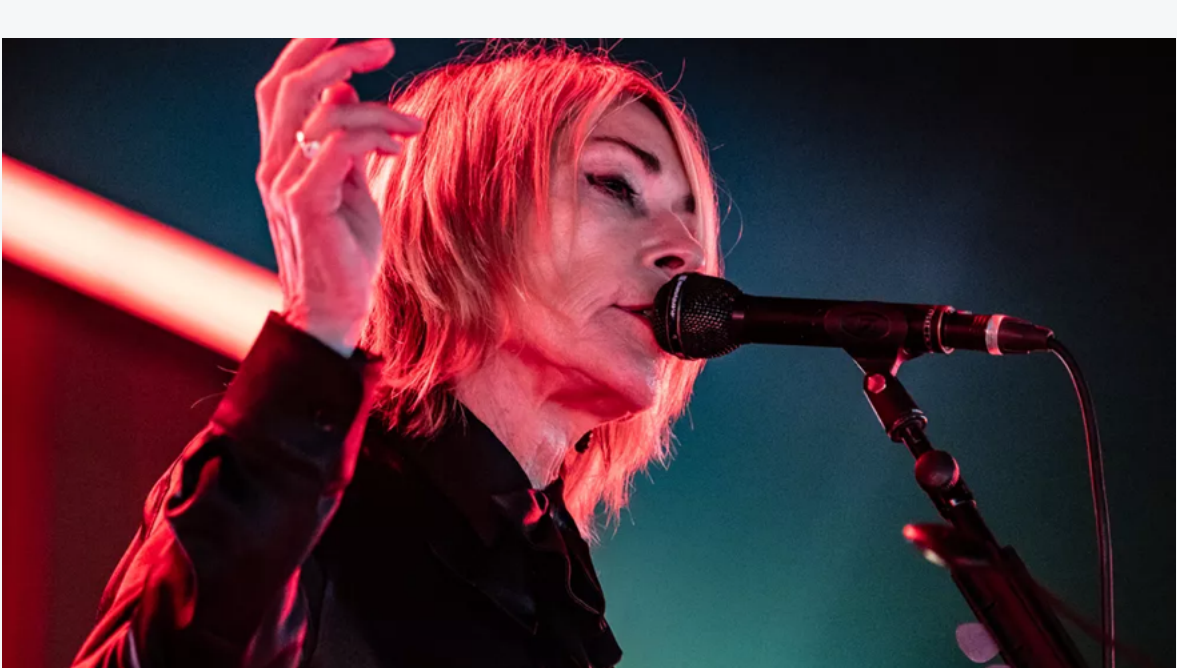
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