

## REVIEWS

## BRIAN ENO

*Drums Between the Bells*

[Warp]

While he's never limited himself to a single, easily defined sound, Brian Eno is known for minimalism and electronic texture—hallmarks of his work with such artists as U2, Coldplay and Talking Heads. In that sense, this collaboration with poet Rick Holland is a textbook move from rock's foremost sonic architect. In keeping with Holland's lyrics—musings on deep-sea mollusks, the infinite cosmos and man's place in between—Eno crafts ethereal, contemplative backings. He rocks out on "Sounds Alien" and gets lightly funky on "Multimedia," but his role is to accentuate, not overshadow. Hence the faint beats and gently buzzing, blipping synths heard throughout. Eno takes a similarly hands-off approach with the vocals. He talk-sings several tracks and leaves the rest to guests (most of them females who emulate computers, underscoring Holland's vague 21st-century angst). While the album gets conceptually heavy, Eno's light touch ensures this philosophical exercise never strains the brain. —Kenneth Partridge

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