

**Get The Blessing**  
Bugs In Amber

Cake | ★ ★ ★

**Jake McMurchie (s), Pete Judge (t), Jim Barr (b) and Clive Deamer (d). Rec. 2008**

If you thought 'Cake Hole' kicked arse as the opener to Get The Blessing's debut, *All Is Yes*, prepare to get nailed to the wall by 'Music Style Product': it slams in harder than the proverbial coal house door in a hurricane. A '21st Century Schizoid Man' for the, er, 21st Century (but with Led Zepp drums), the irony is that this is perhaps the least typical track on the album which is as rich as you'd expect with ska, punk and even free jazz influences. But *Bugs In Amber* is a more playful, more confident release than *All Is Yes*, the musical sourcings less obviously signposted. Gone are the noodly moments, and although there are no harmonic instruments, there's a denser layering of sonic textures (not electronica *per se* but increased pedals and effects for the horns). Factor in some severely assertive dynamics and you have an album that is endlessly re-playable, despite there barely being a recognisable solo throughout.

Stand-outs include the GTB 'standard' 'The Unnameable' which builds from the simplest of scratchy themes to an epic proportion which *Marching Song*-era Mike Westbrook would have been proud of. In contrast 'Tarp' is dark and moody while the title track sounds like the naughty boys have barricaded themselves into the school music room and won't come out until they've trashed the place. Reaction to GTB's debut may have been a tad hysterical, both pro and con, but the "hard" second album actually proves this band are considerably more than bluff and bluster. **Andy Robson**