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Off the Deep End

CD REVIEW

Tales from the Punchbowl

Primus

Interscope/Warner

Don't expect to immediately enjoy every song on this cd. We're talking about Primus after all — the band who seems to take great pleasure in putting walls of weird in front of their music. If you can see through their inherently weird sound, then you are in for a treat.

Their latest album, *Tales from the Punchbowl*, starts off with "Professor Nutbutter's House of Treats", which is arguably the crunchiest song they've ever written. Stomping stuff. Another song of note is (of course) "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver", whose video takes the cake for greatest video so far this year (yee-haw!). Then there is "Southbound Pachyderm", which has a menacing *Meddle*-era Pink Floyd feel. And you can't forget the jigs, and the atmospheric acid-induced ventures into the uncharted territory of prog-rock which make up most of the remaining songs.

As a whole, the album seems to fit somewhere between the sound of *Sailing the Seas of Cheese* and the bizarre *Pork Soda* which took me (a Primus fan) about a year to begin to enjoy! Ler and Tim have deservedly equal billing with Les Claypool's grinding and dumbfounding basslines so you can finally pay attention to the amazing guitar and drum work. Tim has recently been beating out Neil Peart in drummer's polls and his work on this cd is an exercise in ga-ga-bonzo-bass-locked-tom-heavy pounding.

If you are a Primus fan, then *Tales...* is a must, but if you've just seen the video for "Wynona...", then you'd probably be best off initiating yourself into Primus' world with their earlier "more accessible" stuff (yeah right....)

Mike Graham

Somebody Spoke — but for only 34 minutes

CD REVIEW

Somebody Spoke

The Hardship Post

Sub Pop

Originally from Newfoundland, this trio crashed the Halifax music scene a couple of years ago and has been tearing up the place ever since.

Somebody Spoke has been released as a "full-length" album; however, clocking in at 34 or so minutes of music, "full-length" seems kind of generous.

Don't get me wrong though — it's a good 34 minutes. It's just that, well, it's only 34 minutes...

In a recent review of this CD in another publication, *Hardship Post...* sorry, *THE Hardship Post* were compared rather unfavourably to an Elvis Costello without the clever lyrics. Yes, singer Sebastian Lippa sounds a little like Elvis Costello, and if you squint and look at him sideways, they look kinda similar, too, but that's probably just those dark-rimmed glasses. But I digress...

I don't mind if the lyrics aren't quite as deep as Costello's. The songs are catchy, and they bounce out of your stereo at a pleasing pace. In addition to the regular fare, this album has something a little different from the ordinary *The Hardship Post* release. Bassist Mike Pick has added more vocal contributions, and on two tracks, taken the big step up to lead microphone. The songs he sings are quite different from the rest of the album, and his deep voice adds a darker quality to the music. *The Hardship Post...dark?* Yes indeed, sounds impossible, I know, but take a listen. It's weird. But weird in a good way.

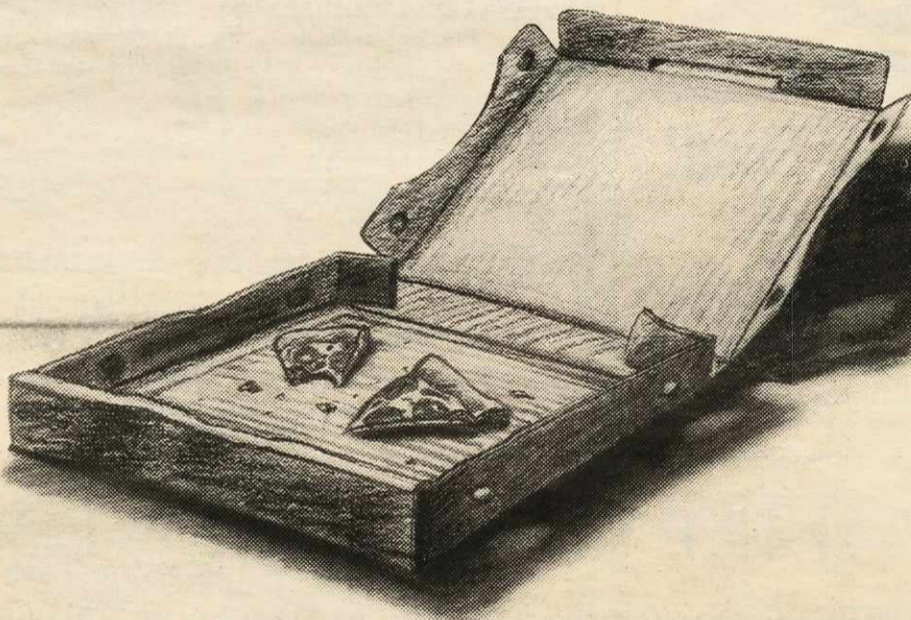
As a final gossipy digression, drummer Matt Clarke "left" the band over the summer. I'm not sure of the conditions of his leaving, but it is rumoured to have been rather messy as Lippa and Pick embarked on a tour as a duo shortly thereafter. The rumour mill also has it that the two realised the error of their ways (playing without a drummer, that is) and that Alyson MacLeod (the drummer who left Jale) will be working with *The Hardship Post* in the future.

Jen Horsey

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