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the Gazette



Continued from p. 13

Well, this is interesting isn't it? Five careers go down the dumper and it's time for a reunion...

If you forget all the dirt that was aired by the tabloids in the last few years and listen to this CD, you'll no doubt remember why exactly these people were popular in the first place. Their most significant hits are included but it's all fair — only four each ('cause then they'd have to call it *Bobby Brown and Friends*).

Bobby has the first and last word here. "My Prerogative", "Humpin' Around", "Every Little Step" and "On Our Own" are the tracks included. If you liked his tracks the first time round, then chances are that you'll still find them affable.

Admittedly, Bell Biv DeVoe sound more than a little outdated on tracks like "B.B.D. (I Thought It Was Me)", "Do Me!" and "Something In Your Eyes". "Poison" is the only legitimate hit here whereas the other three sound a bit crappy, really.

Arguably the least commercially successful at the time, Ralph Tresvant is the only one who still sounds fresh. "Money Can't Buy You Love", "Sensitivity", "Stone Cold Gentleman" and "Do What I Gotta Do" are pleasant enough, but America's answer to Julio Iglesias he is not.

It's easy to dismiss this CD as a marketing ploy by the record company to cash in on nostalgic fans — that's probably the general idea. *New Edition - Solo Hits* is, however, a good album and will probably bring back memories of a pre-New Kids world. If you already own any of these tracks, however, don't bother with the "new" album.

EUGENIA BAYADA

The Aeroplane Flies High
The Smashing Pumpkins
Virgin/EMI

When I first picked up this box-set, I wasn't sure what I was about to hear. Fortunately, that was a good attitude to have. The Pumpkins go all over the musical map in *Aeroplane Flies High*, and they do not disappoint.

The five discs in the box are named after the five singles released from *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, and each disc has its own distinct sound. *Zero* is a hard, edgy CD filled with angst directed at God, elitists, and themselves, whereas *Tonight Tonight* is a quiet CD, with acoustic songs reminiscent of "Spaceboy" and "Stumbleine". The best disc (by far), however, is *Bullet With Butterfly Wings*, where the band launches into some interesting covers. They do The Cars' "You're All I've Got Tonight" and Alice Cooper's "Clones", as well as many others.

This set is proof of the Pumpkins' ability to succeed with many different types of songs. Besides their patented powerful, driving guitars, some songs, such as "Believe," have intricate string arrangements. Also, "My Blue Heaven", found on the *Thirty-Three* disc, sounds like something your grandmother would listen to before you would.

If there is a problem with this set, it is the group's use of synthesizers. Although limited to only a few songs, it is only an annoyance to hear them. If I want to hear a synthesizer, I'll go to the \$5.99 bin at Music World and get a Mister CD, but I don't want to hear them here.

Aside from this one problem, this set rocks. The versatility of the band, and the varying styles found on *Aeroplane*, make this a must-buy for any Pumpkins fan. Good luck, though — there are only ten thousand in Canada.

GREG MCFARLANE

Rome Plows
Rome Plows
Waiting for Herb Records

It kind of pisses me off when there is an excited buzz about a new band on the local music scene. It's not that I specifically give in to the pressure to like them, but sometimes I will be overly critical towards their music. So, after months of hearing people tell me how good the Rome Plows are, I was quite prepared to be way too harsh in this review. But I guess what is cool about this case is that it is one of the few times when all of the talk is actually justified.

This self-titled debut is simply staggering — it demands the listener's attention from the first few chords. Musically, the band combines jazzy rhythms, a few bluesy guitar parts, and all-out rock power to create a sound that can best be described as INTENSE.

One of the best things about the Rome Plows is that they are able to maintain the oh-so-difficult balance between heaviness and quirkiness. In that respect, *NoMeansNo* comes to mind as a comparison, or at a local level, the now defunct Horseshoes and Handgrenades. Again, balance is the key — while the disc's closer, "Fire in the Hole" has the potential for a seething, noise-infested conclusion, the band holds back by choosing a more latent intensity.

The murder tale of "About My Breath...", and the love/hate relationship with the bottle expressed in "Lampshade Aerodynamics", feature sparse vocals that very much reflect the disposition of the music — dark, threatening, and paranoid. With the possible exception of "The Stuntman, Part 1" (which doesn't quite fit the flow of the disc), *Rome Plows* is an amazing piece of work by a trio of musicians/magicians who are in total control of their craft.

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