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# Listening by the numbers

BY MIKE MACDONALD

THE EP "Up and Crumbling" is the second effort from the group Gin Blossoms. The five members of the all-male band hail from Tempe, Arizona, but the five songs that make up the album

seem more Canadian than southern. The reason is they sound vaguely familiar, like a cross between Andrew Cash and The Tragically Hip gone acoustic.

Musically, the group is fine; lyrically, they are a disappointment. They seem to have problems writ-

ing the right lyrics for their songs.

The album starts off strong with the well-versed 'Mrs. Rita', which is about a palm-reader in Phoenix, but becomes increasingly inept at fitting words to music and the tape finishes with the rather weak and

**Gin Blossoms**

"Up and Crumbling"

lyrics 3

music 4

overall 3

All ratings out of five possible points.

mundane 'Keli Richards', about an actress from Boston.

The group does show potential however, particularly on the tracks 'Angels Tonight', and 'Just South of Nowhere'. Perhaps improving their musical interpretation would help strengthen any further work.

This EP has done its job though, since I am now interested in hearing more from the Gin Blossoms.

**Digital Underground**

"Sons of the P"

Lyrics 4

Music 3

Overall 4

I MUST ADMIT I don't listen to much Funk/hip hop, but I am glad that I gave "Sons of the P" a spin. Digital Underground is described in the Attic Records bio as "more an organisation than an actual group" and judging from the length of the credits for this album, I can see why. At least thirty-five different people are listed as rappers, singers and/or musicians in the liner notes.

This diverse membership lead to an interesting range of music on the album, from the poppy to the funky to the jazzy. 'Kiss You Back' and 'No Nose Job' are funny, upbeat songs, while 'Good Thing we're Rappin' is a slower hard-core hip hop number.

One thing that bugs me about the songs is that they all have the same sampled and mechanised beat. I don't mind this when I am downtown drinking and dancing to the 'continuous, mindless rhythm one can hear in any dance bar. However, when the songs actually contain a meaning or message worth hearing, like most of the cuts on 'Sons', this consistent unchanging beat gets really irritating.

This is not really an album one would buy to dance to. It is more the kind of thing one slaps on when flaking out. The reason is that the lyrics are an important part of the presentation and it is hard to jump around and listen at the same time.

Overall, I enjoyed this third effort from the Digital Underground 'family' and I recommend it to anyone who wants to hear some good rap/hip hop/funk/jazz stuff. Watch out, this album contains bad words your parents might not like you to hear.

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