



Photo: Roman Pawluszyn

Thousands of York students stand on the brink of exams this week--the grueling ordeal gets underway next week.

EXTRACKS

The Final Cut
Pink Floyd

Columbia

PEIROL AND PETROFF UNLIMITED

"It's like society took a laxative and just farted. They haven't really had a good shit yet."

John Lennon--Playboy Interview

In *The Final Cut*, Roger Waters seems to be suffering from artistic constipation. His supposed "post-war requiem" makes an effective tranquilizer to lull one into a zombie-like trance. The razor-sharp, sarcastic wit which epitomizes Water's lyrics (as in *The Wall*) is conspicuously lacking in this album.

And yet, despite *The Final Cut's* tone of nihilistic apathy (or more likely because of it), there is something about the album which provokes you to keep, at least, one ear open. The music itself, is largely rehashed themes from *The Wall* (minus synthesizers), as well as being lacklustre and monotonous. The album was recorded in holophonic sound, similar to the 3-D effect of holographic art. The potential for intensely vibrant, rich sound, which holophonic recording promotes, is virtually ignored by Waters in all but one track, "One of the Few". It's as if Waters is merely trying out a new toy to relieve his boredom.

The result is less than satisfying; in fact, it is downright disconcerting. In effect, Waters is swinging a lead balloon. The monotonous sway of this pendulum seems as calculated as a metronome and Water's lacklustre voice refuses to succumb to emotion.

The tracks are strung together in a "mise en scene" fashion, as they merge into one another. Water's lyrics are ambiguous, ranging from blatant nihilism ("Oy, where's the fucking bar, John!" and "so fuck all that"), to self-indulgent sentimentalism ("Do you remember me? How we used to be?"). Waters plays a game of word association with the listener: "Daddy (Eric Fletcher Waters) died"--"jesus crucified"--"what have we done?"--"the hero's return"--"Dresden"--"dying words"--"I had a dream"--"the final cut"--culminating in "so fuck all that" and "we were all equal in the end".

There seems to be no climax or focal point in the album. It leaves one numbed with a pervading sense of listless apathy. It is all too tempting to return the album and ask for a refund. The trouble is, you find yourself glued to your chair, hypnotized by thoughts of Waters' ambiguous *The Final Cut*. Paradoxical questions lurk in the resonance of Waters' lyrics. The sheer dullness of the music forces one to intellectualize the lyrics of the album. What is "the final cut"? Waters sings, "What's done is done". Why then is he pursuing the issue? The "post-war dream" takes on the connotation of a nightmare.

Beneath Waters' talk of the desolation and destruction caused by war is a personal confession bordering on threats of self-alienation. He sings, "Is everyone in? Are you having a nice time? Now the final solution can be applied." In the title track, Waters promises, "and if I'm in I'll tell you what's behind the wall". The final stanza though, reveals Waters' personal confession:

*thought I oughta bare my naked feelings
thought I oughta tear the curtain down
I held the blade in trembling hands
prepared to make it but just then the phone rang
I never had the nerve to make the final cut.*

As Vonnegut writes in *Slaughterhouse Five*, about the bombing of Dresden, "So it goes". Waters echoes this bleakness. Yet he neglects Vonnegut's final line--a bird chirps "poo-tweet". In *The Final Cut*, no birds sing. It seems Roger Waters, himself, has nothing left to sing about.

The Tenants

The Tenants

CBS Records

JACK LE BLANC

The Tenants are surprisingly polished. The arrangements are light and tasteful and the band carries a tune with one or two instruments. Each tune is punctuated with strong, snapping leads.

The group doesn't have much history to speak of and the group's word-of-mouth popularity has mostly to do with their extremely high-quality live sound.

Keyboard player and sax man Fraser McDougall handles both instruments decisively. His talent for hooking a song with memorable riffs and contributes heavily to the band's appeal. Andy McLean, on lead guitar, plays off McDougall, taking the lead with understated solos and crisp timing. He shows the co-ordination that the band has gained from long sessions in the garages of North York. On vocals, Gary Brown demonstrates a powerful, clear voice that's reminiscent of Sting with an element of Roger Daltry.

This album certainly has its share of catch tunes; songs like "Look the Other Way" and "I Love Romance" are throwbacks to the classic pop period when melody, structure and harmony were key ingredients. Some people have suggested, unjustly, that this band's sound is too close to The Police. And with the success of Men at Work and The Payolas, The Tenants seem to be on the right track. However, the band has a few new ideas as well as a strong sense of harmony and an understanding of the virtues of sparseness.

What's left to say, except that you might take in The Tenants into your household.

Journalism drives scribe insane

PAULETTE PEIROL

There seems to be an unwritten rule that first year students should crawl in the shadows of the ominous Ross building, keep a low profile, and generally maintain anonymity. Yet, as the non-conformists say, "rules" (ex or im-plicit) "are made to be broken".

Many friends have asked me, "How did you get into Excalibur; I mean, how did you have the guts?" Guts? Insanity perhaps, maybe even masochism...but I wouldn't call guts a pre-requisite. Basically, I crawled through the front door, crept on tip-toe into the newsroom, and hid beneath the keys of a formidable typewriter. After a while, it got rather stifling in that typewriter

cocoon. At the most opportune moment (just before the G-key was about to pulverize my Gut), I finally emerged, turned on my voicebox, and, wonder of wonders, managed to whisper "hi there". I must have said something wrong, for Paula interpreted my salutation as an enthusiastic, sacrificial offering of my time, talent (?) and sanity. From then on, I progressed (regressed?) to a point of no return.

Seminars began, "Well, no, I can't tell you much about *The Medea* (no offense against her), but if you want to know the latest scoop about X..." Glory be to my sympathetic superiors...I'll mention you in my Thanksgiving prayers. This will be the summer when Paulette does Summer Reading for September, (promises, promises.)

Yes, that means I'll be back next year (for better or worse). Journalism is an incurable disease; fortunately it isn't contagious. Let this serve as a warning...Excalibur is habit-forming. The disease strikes subjects with variable degrees of severity; those with an insatiable curiosity, masochistic tendencies and insomnia are usually the most susceptible.

Uh oh, Paula is telling me to keep this short (financial hard times have hit Excal too). If there's one thing that keeps me persevering, it's Excal's unbiased editors; they cut for length, but never content.

What began as an innocent "hi there", has metamorphosed into a perpetual "anybody wanna coffee?" I'm seriously considering a referendum of my own, proposing the question "Do you agree that Paulette Peirol's by-line should be changed to "The Anonymous Caffeine-Addict?" Have an enlightening, non-literary summer everyone...and don't let the "G-key" intimidate you next year!

FROM HERE TO INSANITY, I REMAIN...PAULETTE PEIROL, aka A.C.A.

P.S. Thanks to all at Excal who encourage / convinced / (brain-washed?) me to conclude that all this insanity is worth it.

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