

ARTS

AURAL SECTION

# Rock 'n'Roll Lives



Bruce Adamson

**The Cynics**  
Rock 'n' Roll  
Get Hip Recordings

When one starts to think about North America's rock and roll hotspots, Pittsburg usually ends up ranking closer to Des Moines than New York or L.A.

I can think of two wailing metal guitarists (Mr. Big's Paul Gilbert and Winger's Reb Beach) but until I heard the Cynics I thought I had heard everything that Steelertown had to offer.

Holy boilermaker, does Terry Bradshawville ever have something to offer! The Cynics are a terrific band, and their most

recent release, *Rock 'n' Roll* more than lives up to its deceptively simple title.

Energized, dynamic, confident and smokin', this album will undoubtedly send moms and dads scurrying for cover across the continent.

The Cynics burn through 14 tunes on this platter, and sound like they've absorbed everything good that's gone down in rock since 1960.

Vocalist Michael Kastelic's style and delivery is strongly influenced by the not-too-shabby-company of Ian Hunter, Jim Morrison and Eric Burdon. His lyrics deal with the usual love-lost-love found and teenage alienation themes, but Kastelic's great conviction and power make these tried and true

themes quite refreshing in contemporary rock's "politically correct" literary environment.

Bassist Steve Magee and drummer Tom Holn provide a muscular Animals style groove throughout, while guitarist Gregg Kostelich lays down killer hooks, twangy arpeggiated chord progressions and late 60s distorted death fuzz.

The tunes are catchy, dynamically varied, and never venture into the boredom zone thanks to the band's Ramones-like commitment to the magic two minutes-fifty mark.

*Rock 'n' Roll*, with its kinetic first take vibe and raw, rebellious passion proves that, occasionally, there is truth in advertising.

## Cup O'Joe



by Garth Hagey

**Shuffletown**  
Joe Henry  
A&M

Johnny smiles over the new 'musical instrument' his father bought: black, white and purple buttons all in a row. Smiling, he reaches out and presses the large purple 'melody maker' and boom-chaaka-boom, "I'm a musician!" the boy ejaculates with glee.

In the age of instant fame by the press of a button, people's mottos have become: "Hey, why learn to play an instrument when I can use my computer?" or simply, "Fuck 'em, I'm not gonna practice!" one wonders where talent and skill come in.

Hope comes in the form of Joe

Henry and a few other musicians who actually play instruments without any synthesizing, sequencing, mashing, trash-compacting, or any other aural alterations.

The exquisite sound of live acoustical instruments, with a range of instruments such as resonating guitars, violin, mandolin, upright bass, vibraphone, accordion, trumpet, and Jew's harp, emanate from *Shuffletown*.

With his own style of Flamenco Folk, you can tell Joe and his band really WORKED for their music. Remember those days when people actually worked for what they wanted, including artists?

Whaddabout the lyrics, you ask? With his Dylanesque delivery Joe nabs at your musical soul (if you still have one).

Avoiding fad politics, Joe deals

with more universal issues of love and war and hanging out in the church. Sounds cheesy, eh? Damn straight! Just call me "la tete de fromage", I like the stuff.

Some of the more mozzarella tasting songs contain lactose-lustre lyrics that stick to the mind.

There's the snappy "John Hanging" about fish singing in November, and the more serious "Ben Turpin In The Army", an interesting comment on war.

The cheesiest (like Kraft) is "Helena By The Avenue" a mournful kind of elegy of being trapped in different realities. "And if the morning leaves you/with just the afternoon/in the darkness of your room/ Helena you will know/the flowers are the first to go"

Too corny for you? Big bloody deal, you know it ain't easy bein' cheesy.

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