

Rollins' raw power

by Michael Graham

*I am the man from a human choke hold
I am the product of your restraint
I watched the years pass by me
Never once did I say no
Now I watch myself explode
My body is scarred by age
Now you get to taste my rage*

Rollins Band

End of Silence

These lyrics, from the song "Just Like You", set the tone for the Rollins Band CD *End of Silence*. The band is fronted by none other than Henry Rollins, ex-member of Black Flag — a band which I was halfheartedly into during my junior high years just before they broke up. I haven't really followed Black Flag or Rollins since then and, in fact, this is the first Rollins Band CD to catch my attention, although they have recorded a few others.

Rollins is the driving force behind this powerhouse band. If I could choose only one word to describe Rollins it would have to be just "intense". He seems to be the sort of performer who, if he didn't have a musical outlet, would be hurting people. I use the qualifier "seems" because in all of the interviews I have read and seen with him, he comes across as a guy with his head screwed on straight and with a good sense of humour.

It is when Henry Rollins gets on stage, or puts a mic/pen in his hand, that another side is revealed. He calls himself a modern day bluesman, but his blues are dark navy, compared to the traditional blues I know. He also claims to have seen *Apocalypse Now* over 80 times; but I would bet that he has seen *Taxi Driver* at least 100 times considering lyrics like "You're like me — Sometimes you scare yourself / The things that you think /



Henry Rollins: *And then I said to that bastard Mulroney - take this! And the way that you feel...*

The lyrics on this album are filled to the brim with angst and self-deprecation. Rollins has stated that the song "Low Self Opinion" is about himself although written in the second person. When you listen to Rollins you hear a pure and very intense, roaring rage of a catharsis.

The lyrics, for the most part, revolve around his failures and shortcomings. He isn't taking his anger out on politicians (wouldn't that be original), he is raging against his feeble failings — raging against himself. Take, for example, "Almost Real", a song about one of his relationships: "Wasted time thinking about you / You

know I've come to hate myself / Smashing my hands against the wall / Trying to forget the foolish way I felt / You're so kind when it serves you well..." The music on this album matches Rollins' angry and loud lyrics. Songs such as "Another Life" and "Just Like You" are great, because they are just so intense! Henry Rollins makes the lead singer of Pantera sound like a smurf on these tracks!

I bought *End of Silence* on an impulse — those 20% off coupons suck me in every time. They make me feel as if I must buy a CD, even if I don't have any in mind. However, I was happy with my purchase and happy to find that the CD is over 72 minutes long, clocking in just behind *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* and *Exit Stage Left*. Although there are a few throw-aways on this album, I got my money's worth. The only thing that this CD needs to go along with it is a punching bag to let your own aggression out (or a bass with a distortion pedal to abuse, which I find quite cathartic).

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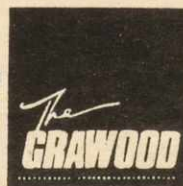
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Lion in the Streets

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The set consists of nothing more than a black space with an array of wooden chairs and tables that are eerily arranged and re-arranged under blue light prior to each scene. The effect is haunting and the result is ideal for the disjunction of the scenes and the play as a whole.

Lion In The Streets is playing at the Dalhousie Arts Centre in the David Mack Murray studio until Saturday October 24th. Shows are at 8 p.m. as well as a Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are available in advance from the box office on the main floor of the Dalhousie Arts Centre.