

Record Reviews



Barney Bentall...

...and his *Legendary Hearts* play an already sold-out show at Dinwoodie Saturday. Our critic hopes the show is better than the album.

Nevil's followup disappoints

A Place Like This
Robbie Nevil
EMI/Manhattan/Capitol

by E.S. Petruszczak
A couple of years ago, Robbie Nevil emerged on the pop charts with the sultry "C'est La Vie" and a successful debut album. Like all

too many follow-ups though, *A Place Like This* is somewhat of a failure in that the majority of the songs appear contrived in the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" style.

This is not to say that *A Place Like This* is a bad record; perhaps formulaic would be a better description. Even with the expected debut bias, the album's formula does not work. Cliche-ridden tracks such

What's all the fuss about?

Barney Bentall & The Legendary Hearts
Self-titled
Epic

by Ron Kuipers

Barney Bentall & The Legendary Hearts are, according to the Junos anyway, Canada's latest good thing. They were selected as the best new group from a field that included other boring Canadian bands like 54-40, The Pursuit of Happiness, and The Northern Pikes. This time around, however, the judges (or whatever species of animal they have decide at the Junos) picked the most boring act. If their debut album is any indication, Barney Bentall & The Legendary Hearts will soon fade into oblivion, the same way that nearly every other band that wins the Juno for best new act has.

Seriously, it is not clear what the hype surrounding this band is all about. The record just sounds like a bunch of Bruce Springsteen or John Cougar Mellencamp covers. Nothing on this album is original at all. Sure, the band can play their instruments pretty well, but so can five

million other bar bands across the continent. It's a mystery how they ever got out of the bar in the first place.

It's obvious what this band is trying to pull off. Lines like "Bobby drives a pick-up for a corner store/four bucks an hour and he's hoping for more/he's 28 years old and he still lives at home..." There's a million Bobby's across this land..." don't need further explanation. And these lyrics don't even have any Canadian flavour as Barney talks about driving down the "inter-state." Are there any of those in Canada?

To be fair, however, the lyrics do deal with other topics like prison, nuclear war, and marital infidelity, but it's doubtful whether or not that should make anybody rush out to buy this album. Because the music is the most important, and it's absolutely bland. The record is bookended by two relatively energetic, interesting songs, but everything else in the middle is pap. It has a drum beat that never changes, but only serves to put the listener to sleep. This album could have been saved if it contained any attempt at originality, but none is forthcoming.

as "Somebody Like You," "Getting Better," and "Love is Only Love" are prepackaged to sell and thus reflect the sound common to most rhythm and blues songs today — unoriginal, uninspired, and uninteresting, but with the necessary "hook" (i.e. good instrumentals, catchy melodies, catchy phrases, etc.) to ensure airplay, and fleeting chart success.

ballad dedicated to friends of Nevil's who, surmising from the enclosed lyric sheet, have presumably died), and the stylish "Can I Count on You," a song somewhat reminiscent of "Domino" (from Nevil's debut album).

Overall, Robbie Nevil's *A Place Like This* is a disappointment. The sensual energy that captivated listeners on his debut has unfortunately succumbed to the trappings of blatant commerciality. It's too bad.

Two of the most promising tracks on the album are "Too Soon" (a sentimental

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