

## On record

# Heavy heavy-metal parody

Spinal Tap  
From the Original Motion  
Picture Soundtrack  
"This is Spinal Tap"  
Polygram Records

Once or twice a year that great American institution, the novelty record, makes its way onto the charts. The latest entry is Spinal Tap's *From The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, "This is Spinal Tap."

With a title as cumbersome as its subject matter, the soundtrack album dishes up an appetizer of vintage pseudo-sixties schlock, but saves the main course for an array of irreverent, heavy-metal parodies. The members of the British quartet are (ostensibly) David St. Hubbins (guitar and lead vocals), Nigel Tufnel (lead guitar and vocals), Derek Smalls (bass), and Mick Shrimpton (drums).

The songs cover most of the typical heavy-metal themes, and many cuts ape styles of specific groups.

"Tonight I'm Gonna Rock You Tonight" is an upbeat number reminiscent of Boston's "Smokin'," with Nigel's self-indulgent and, at times, off-key guitar leads, electronically masked vocals, and a flashy but feeble organ solo.

The subject is sex with pre-pubescent girls and owes its pedigree to Led Zeppelin's "The Ocean." St. Hubbins belts out the saucy lyric, "You're sweet

but you're just four feet/And you still got your baby teeth/You're too young and I'm too well hung/But tonight I'm gonna rock you."

"Heavy Duty" is a plodding tribute to all those songs that plug themselves by talking about how great rock'n'roll is. It features extra-low echoed vocals and a duel between synthesizer and guitar with each trying to play a higher note than the other. Both eventually go completely out of control.

"Big Bottom" has a throbbing, monotonous beat and flatulent synthesizer outbursts. St. Hubbins is the titanium-voiced mega-stud as he sings, "I met her on Monday/It was my lucky bun day... I love her each weekday/Each velvety cheek-day... Big bottom, drive me out of my mind/How could I leave this behind?"

"Stonehenge" is a swipe at ponderous attempts to fuse classical music and rock, and be philosophical at the same time. The song opens with desolate whistling sounds and lonely chords, accompanied by a spoken narrative about the Druid race. It moves to standard rock bombast with swirling synthesizer motifs, back to eerie sound effects with more narrative, then to a sprightly mandolin playing Irish folk music, and once more to the spoken Druid bit. It is the least obvious of the parodies, because its thematic and musical elements have been used with such great

success by bands like Rush and Wishbone Ash.

The rest of the album is equally overblown, and continues to borrow bits and pieces from other rock songs, using them in all the wrong places and for all the wrong reasons.

The record is a success because it manages to make heavy metal, and other forms of dinosaur rock, look insipid without being that way itself. These novelty discs tend to lose their appeal quickly, and this one is probably no exception, but it does retain an endearing quality.

Perhaps the final paragraph of the *Rocklopedia Britannicus*' entry on the band (reprinted in the album) best sums it up. "Though neither a critics' nor a public favorite, Spinal Tap continues to fill a much needed void."

Kevin Frank

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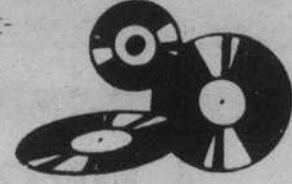
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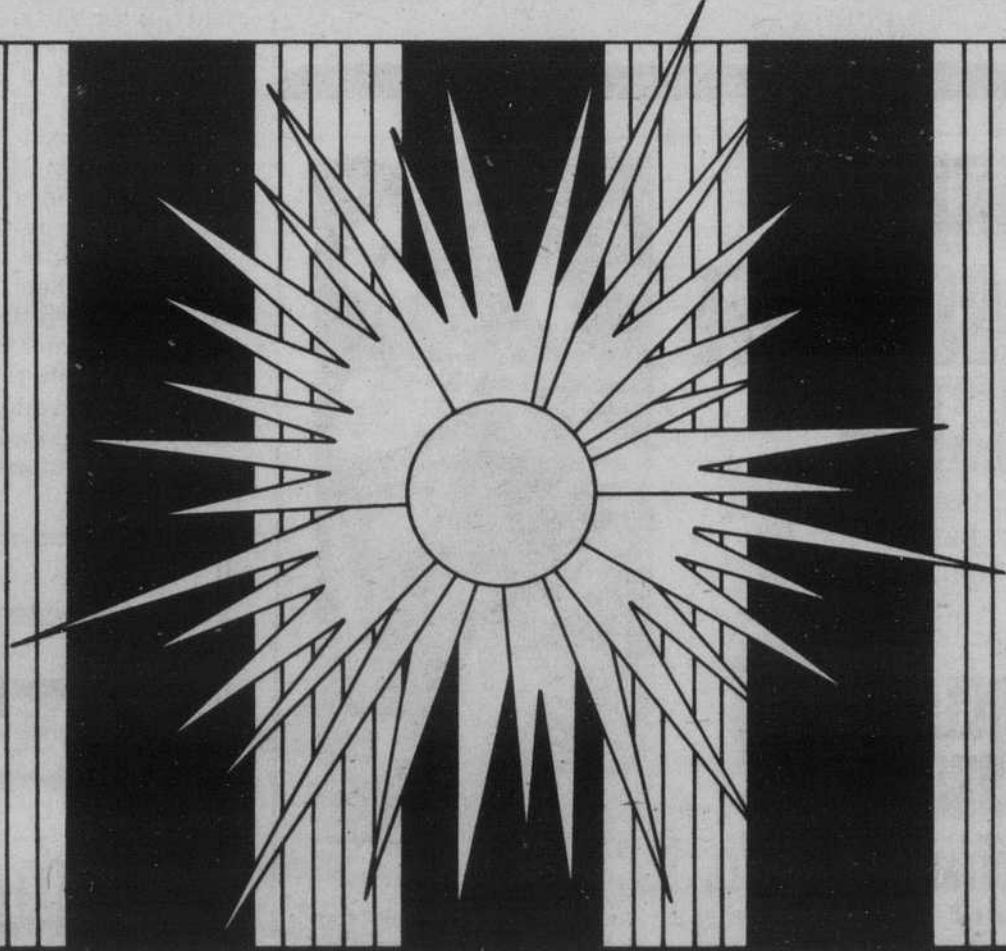
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