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Digging Dig, Muffs and Adams



THE MUFFS

★★★ 1/2

GROUP: The Muffs
LABEL: Warner Bros.

By Dave Charbonneau
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Muffs are a happy band. Their catchy guitar riffs, and heavy-but-not-too-heavy drum beats seem to make them a prime candidate to make the big leap from indie status to mainstream mega-stars.

However, Kim Shattuck won't let them reach that point. Shattuck is the lead singer/guitarist of the four-member band, and her voice is just raspy and crunchy enough to assure her band no airplay on the dreaded Top 40 stations.

Shattuck has a voice that can sound lovely at one point and screechingly bodacious a split second later. With a solid band behind her, Shattuck leads into many ready-for-VH-1 choruses with Headbanger Ball-inspired screams. Her songs of love don't really touch any new ground, nor does the band. But that's the whole point: using a tried and true approach to make an enjoyable record. But The Muffs do it a little better than most.

On The Muffs' slickly produced, self-titled Compact Disc, the two-male, two-female unit has put together an album packed with undeniably tasty punk pop gems. While many bands nowadays seem determined to create that "new sound" no matter how bad the music actually sounds, The Muffs use the same straightforward approach the Ramones have been using since the 1970s: Don't get too fancy, just find a cool riff, stick with it, and most importantly, keep the songs short.

Only one of the 16 cuts on the CD eclipses the three-and-a-half minute mark, and many chime

in at less than two-and-a-half minutes, leaving the listener not wanting longer songs, but *more* songs.

The album does not have one valley, but has a number of peaks, and quite frankly, too many of them to mention in this space.

The opener "Lucky Guy," gets things rolling with pounding drums and (of course) a simple yet catchy guitar lick. The song barrels into a Go-Gos-esque chorus with Shattuck literally screaming at the top of her lungs a la L7. That sets the mood for the next 15 songs, which vary from a 30-second thrash punk splinter to the album's acoustic closer.

The other brilliant cuts on the album include "Big Mouth," "Baby Go Round" and "Another Day," but, for the third time, this album is pretty much flawless. The world needs more bands like this.



WASTELAND

★★

GROUP: Dig
LABEL: Wasteland Records

The first thing I noticed about Dig's new album is it was produced by Dave Jergen, who has produced Jane's Addiction and Alice In Chains. So, instantly I had high expectations.

No, it doesn't sound like either of the aforementioned bands. Lead singer/guitarist Scott Hackwith's voice does resemble Perry Farrell at times, and a lot of the slow bass-carried rhythms, and voice box-enhanced vocals bring to mind Alice In Chains, but this band is by no means a clone of any band, Alice, Jane's or otherwise.

Wasteland instead has the band experimenting with a number of different sounds and paces.

The result is an uneven, sometimes great, sometimes dull

product.

The best song, for its novelty value as much as anything else, is "Feet Don't Touch the Ground." The song opens with laid-back vocals, and just when you think you've got another band of Jane's Addiction wannabes, the chorus kicks in that sounds straight off of an early Ratt album. A curious mix to be sure, but Dig pulls it off with striking ease.

"Unlucky Friend" is another one of those listener-friendly songs that flows from a quiet acoustic beginning into a booming chorus. Hackwith's voice especially sparkles in this song.

The fuzz-filled "I'll Stay High," is a wild ride that bounces all over the place, but it's a catchy tune with good lyrics.

The rest of the album has a hard time finding a direction. "Tight Brain" is a straight-ahead rocker with some cool overdubbing in the chorus, and "Conversation" is a good thumping number with what sounds like a dinner party at the beginning (fun to try and hear some of the conversations with headphones), but the album loses some points for songs like "Any more" and "Believe" that go absolutely nowhere.

The poor songs on this CD are disappointing, but overall, the good songs make it decent enough to maybe warrant spending that refund you got for dropping your math class.



EVOLUTION

★★ 1/2

GROUP: Oleta Adams
LABEL: Polygram

By John Fleischli

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Oleta Adams has specialized in the love song. Most of the

Turn to **ALBUMS**, Page 27C

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