

MUSIC

Mellow vibes define 'Better View'

By Isa Lester
Freelance Reporter

Higher ground usually refers to a place of retreat from battle, a place where one can lick wounds and take a breather. For its members, the band Higher Ground provides such a respite. Their latest release, *Better View*, is testament to the virtues of individual musicianship, band cohesiveness and a mellow attitude.



Better View
Higher Ground

★★★★

With a genuinely friendly mix of music and soothing vibes, *Better View* invites the listener to sway along with the music. A close ear will detect a large variety of influences, including bluegrass, folk and Celtic, all harmonizing to produce sounds reminiscent of The Doobies and The Dead.

Still, the pleasantly original feel of this music defies classification. In a recent press interview, the band referred to its genre as "acoustic-fired backroots rock."

Indeed, the term aptly describes the product of four solid and creative band members.

Without a doubt, co-writer Alan Glickenhau exudes talent. His versatile virtuosity reverberates through acoustic, electric and slide guitars, as well as the fiddle, mandolin and five-string banjo.

David Kronenberg is a complimentary co-writer, who also plays acoustic guitar and provides lead vocals. East Coast native Chuck Masi plays a grooving bass, while Oregonian Josh Biggs provides a textural and rhythmic background.

With so many influences, is Higher Ground just a bland, homogenized mess? Certainly not. After two years of touring, the band has a distinguishing tightness. This, along with a comfortable and positive style, makes the band a pleasure to listen to.

Tonight's concert should be a treat to fresh ears and devoted fans alike. Higher Ground plays with



COURTESY PHOTO

Higher Ground will be playing with Yellow Wood Junction tonight at the WOW Hall at 8:30. Tickets are available at the door for \$5 and the concert is for all ages.

YellowWood Junction at the WOW Hall at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and the concert is for all ages.

For more information, call 687-2746, or hook up to the WOW Hall online: <http://www.efn.org/~wowhall>.

Emotional lyrics pack Pumpkins' CD

By J. Daniel Pearson
Freelance Reporter

The Smashing Pumpkins have always been somewhat 1-D. The band's first few albums are not much more than party songs, laced with the occasional — as singer-guitarist Billy Corgan puts it — "cheesy radio ballad."

The Smashing Pumpkins came close to breaking up recently for this very reason but decided to give it one more shot before calling it quits.

It worked.

Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness has the potential to be regarded one day as one of the best rock albums of all time. The CD manages to cover the entire spectrum of human emotion in 28 songs — much like The Beatles did with *Abbey Road*.

It's that good.

This is an album you can curl up with under the blankets and reminisce about lost loves or chances. You can throw the CD on while getting to know someone and have your own soundtrack that will forever remind you of those times. Or, it can be played during some of your more rambunctious moods



Mellon Collie
and the
Infinite
Sadness

The Smashing Pumpkins

★★★★★

when you're laughing and being loud with your friends.

It's music a l l y diverse. It's risky. It's a collective breath of fresh air in the day of post-

can bring back memories of a specific period in life, almost like it was yesterday. Songs like these often have the ability to spin your day off in an unanticipated direction and can whip deep-seeded emotions past you with the force of a hurricane.

It's this type of feeling — a sort of déjà-vu — that is needed in human lives. It reminds us that we are sentimental beings, that we are alive. Two songs — "Cupid de Locke" and "Thru the Eyes of Ruby" — accomplish this in many ways.

Suddenly, old lovers may appear and you can remember every detail of their face, catch a whiff of their scent or feel their hand in yours. The memories become endless and keep rolling long after the music fades out.

That's what makes *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness* so good and why it stands out from anything that has been released in quite some time. The sounds each song creates are very personal, stirring experiences.

This is an album worth remembering. Most of all, it's an album worth feeling.

grunge-cheese-rock. The first few songs sound like the same old Pumpkins — straightforward, distorted guitar riffs and basic chord progressions — and isn't very exciting, but then it turns the corner.

Each song, beginning with "Zero" and ending with "Farewell and Good Night," sounds unique. It's almost impossible to classify even one in a particular musical genre, but that's part of the mystique about *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness* — you never know what to expect.

It's funny how certain songs

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