

Rock band Helmet's 'Aftertaste' shows lack of creativity

By Les Zaczek
Freelance Reporter

It was 1993, the climax of the grunge revolution: flannel shirts, distorted guitars and long hair. And somewhere from New York came Helmet. These boys looked more like the clean-cut average Joe, but they knew how to rock.

With furiously rhythmic guitars and Ozzy-esque vocals, Helmet brought us the hit "Unsung," which got plenty of MTV and radio airplay, helping them to sell quiet a few copies of their major-label debut, *Meantime*.

A couple years later they released the follow up, *Betty*, but due to the lack of a hit single the record went largely unnoticed.

Now Helmet is back with *Aftertaste*, hoping to bring back their popularity and reestablish themselves as a "buzz-band."

In case you've never heard Helmet, they play riff-heavy rock that isn't far from metal if you take out screaming vocals and guitar solos. Helmet is definitely a rhythm-oriented band. The guitar sounds more like a sledgehammer than an instrument of melody.

As far as Helmet albums go, *Aftertaste* is good, but it doesn't take the band anywhere beyond their usual sound. It seems like the band is stuck in a musical pit, limited by the unique style they developed.

From the opening track "Pure," we know this is Helmet as we remember them, thanks to pounding bass, lurching guitars, melodic vocals and jazz-tinged drums.

"Renovation" still holds your interest with a good headbanging riff and a driving beat. But a few songs into the album, Helmet simply runs out of new tricks. It's as if they were trying to play the same song again and again. By the end of the record, you become tired of it.

This is really too bad because technically, Helmet is a great band. The rhythm section is super-tight, the vocals are good and the guitar work is excellent. The lyrics are also fairly interesting. Check out "Birth Defect," with its words of wisdom: "All the good that you discover/In people that you hate/Draw them close and pencil thin/Then they're easy to erase."

"Broadcast Emotion" is equally poignant, stating, "I like the way you set yourself goals/The blind ambition you sport like new clothes ... At least you've got yourself impressed ... You love the sound of your own voice/You're always vocal, affecting passion/Wholesale opinions will stay in fashion."



John Stanier, Page Hamilton, Henry Bogdan and Chris Traynor are New York rock band Helmet.



REVIEW
Aftertaste
Helmet
★★
(rock)



International Week 1997

April 18

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Politics in Yugoslavia and Bosnia in Ben Linder 1pm-2pm
Women Around the World in Ben Linder 2pm-4pm

All events during weekdays are free and open to the public.

ARCO



am pm

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Information Session:

Tuesday, April 22
EMU Cedar C
6:00 p.m.

Interview Date:

Wednesday, April 23

To sign up for an interview, please contact the Career Services Office, or e-mail us at psidmsd@aarco.is.arco.com. Please visit our college recruitment Web site at www.arco.com/PSI. PSI is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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