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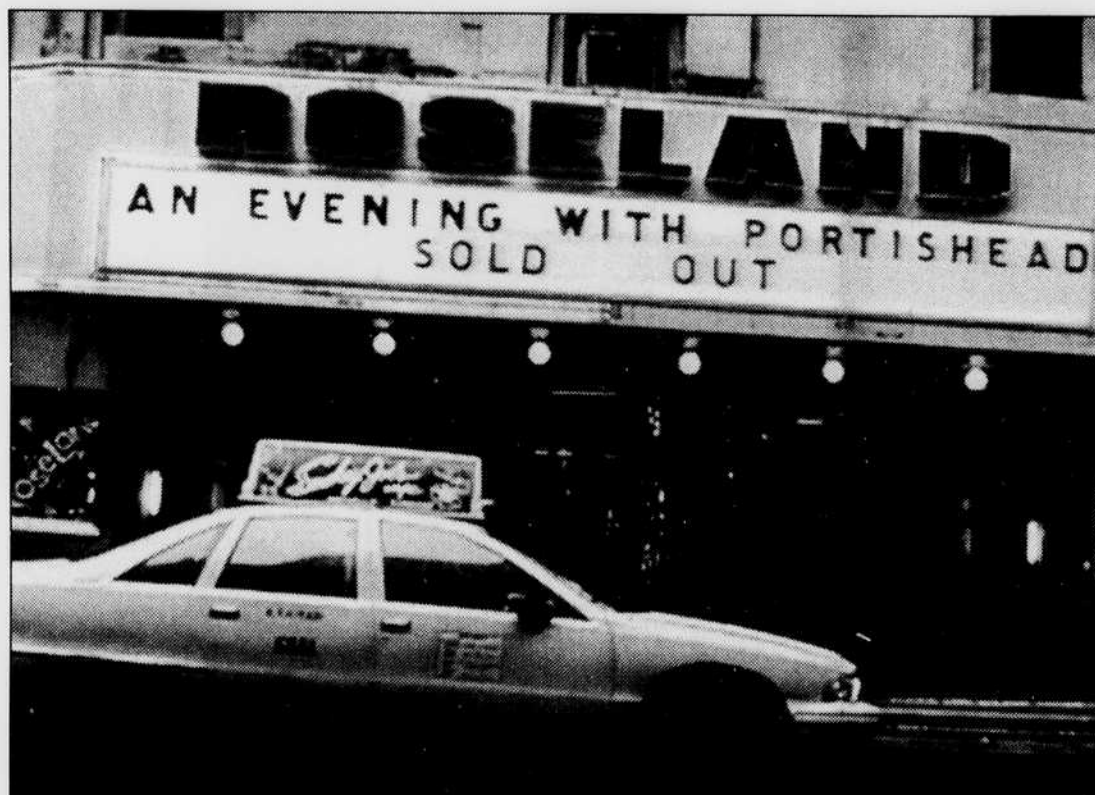
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The British band Portishead's latest release, 'PNYC,' is a live CD recorded during its concert last year at New York's Roseland Theater.

Live CD captures spirit of band

By Amy Boytz
Oregon Daily Emerald

So you're a big fan of Portishead but couldn't foot the bill to fly to New York last year for their orchestral performance at the Roseland Theater?

No worries. "PNYC," the newest release from the Brit trip-hopers, will recreate the moment for you. The 11-song album highlights moments from this intimate performance, which included a live orchestra and a five-piece horn section to complement the band's sound.

Portishead's tantalizing music melds well with the romantic mood evoked by the orchestra, creating a seductive and beautiful album.

Many of the tracks on "PNYC" are from the band's second disc, the self-titled "Portishead." The concert at the Roseland, which took place two months before "Portishead" was released, was the first time material from this album was performed live. Judging from the crowd's response to each song, it must have gone well.

Songs such as "Humming," "Cowboys" and "All Mine" delve straight into Portishead's

sultry blend of bass and beats with singer Beth Gibbons's ethereal vocals. Though the album was recorded live, it captures the classic sound of Portishead. The band employs special effects on Gibbons's vocals and turntable samples, creating the feeling of a studio album.

Also on the album are hits from the band's first release, "Dummy." From the first notes of the songs "Mysterious" and "Glory Box," the crowd erupts with cheers. Portishead lives up to their expectations and delivers intense performances of each song. "Glory Box" hardly sounds like a live recording, as Portishead performs with the richness of a studio recording.

Two of the tracks on "PNYC," "Sour Times" and "Roads," were not recorded at the New York performance but were taken from other live performances

during the band's 1998 world tour.

Though these songs do not feature the live orchestra, they are nonetheless in keeping with the dark, romantic feeling of the rest of the disc. Especially beautiful is the meek "Roads," featuring Gibbons singing a capella at the conclusion of the song.

"PNYC" plays like the score to a dramatic movie. The strings and horns serve as the representation of tension throughout the performance, and Gibbons seems to narrate the plot as it unfolds. Add Geoff Barrow's gritty samples and the haunting sounds provided by Adrian Utley's guitar and Moog synthesizer, and "PNYC" lets the drama manifest itself.

Along with the CD, Portishead also will release a video and double-vinyl of the performance. A limited-edition CD-ROM will be for sale on the band's official Web site, www.Portishead.co.uk.

Usually, live albums are a disappointment. But "PNYC" is an amazing collection and a work of art that captures the spirit of Portishead.

PNYC

Portishead

TYPE: Brit trip-hop

RATING:

★★★★★



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