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Chalk up 'failure' for Hall and King Missile III

The creators of 'Detachable Penis' still offer witty lyrics, but the music gets in the way

By Michael Hines

The music of John S. Hall can make Beavis and Butthead laugh and a poet

Hall, the frontman for King Missile III, falls short of producing music to the ears in the band's latest release, "Failure."

The poet grew up in New York City's

Failure King Missile III RATING:

Greenwich Village and has created the third incarnation of his spoken-word band, King Missile. Yes, this is the

same band that produced the hilarious "Detachable Penis."

The funny thing about "Failure" is that its 14 tracks are crude, sad and insightful all at the same time.

The title track, about self-help books, is brooding:

"If at first you don't succeed, fail and fail again. And fail again. And fail again. "And walk tall, and stand up and say, 'I

am a failure. I am a failure. I am a failure.''
King Missile III will perform in Portland on March 8 at the Satyricon. Bradford Reed is the opening act.

Hall has a gift for taking the embarrassing parts of society, such as the "Jerry Springer" television show, and making them truly ridiculous.

The song that sticks out most on this album is "Gay/Not Gay," a delightfully nasty diatribe about what makes someone gay.

Here are some of Hall's insights:

"Sports are gay, especially contact sports — unless you're the only guy on either team, in which case it's straight"; "Watching pornography alone is neutral, like eating a sandwich: it's neither straight nor gay"; and "Discussing sex with a woman is straight. Even saying to a woman, 'Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to suck a cock,' is straight."

This is some funny stuff. Unfortunately, Hall's spoken-word style just doesn't seem to mesh with the my-first-Casio-keyboard-style "musical" interludes between deep thoughts. The new music just doesn't work as well as "Detachable Penis."

While the church organ music in "Gay/Not Gay" is humorously ironic, it's also annoying.

Hall either could use better musical backup or should just drop the rest of his band, because it takes away from his humorous musings.

Another of Hall's obvious talents is his ability to tell a story. "The Adventures of Planky" is a fantastic tale of a lump of plankton and a stick of wood failure

that become friends.

The story details how the two friends set off to "have fun and adventures." They meet a monkey who tells them, "It's pronounced 'Monkey-ee,' not 'Monkey."

This kind of detail also lends itself to "The Boy Made Out of Bone China" and "The Little Sandwich That Got a Guilt Complex Because He Was the Sole Survivor of a Horrible Bus Crash."

These are all truly original, crazy stories. It's too bad they are hindered by the music.

Coming up

III WHO: King Missile III III WHEN: March 8 III WHERE: The Satyricon in Portland

Final Four

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The flow of the game is really smooth, with no extra waiting for things to happen. The producers of the game, 989 Sports, have created it so its load times are shorter than the hang time of a good free throw.

One problem with the game, however, is that every time any kind of good shot is made, you get an instant replay. After two minutes of playing and 10 instant replays, you begin to look for the "off" button on the replay feature. Fortunately, there is one.

The other problem — and, arguably, the only "real" problem — is that it is incredibly difficult to pick up a loose ball. The computer opponent somehow always seems to pick it up before you can.

The game does exhibit some real "three-point" design with its premier features. "NCAA Final Four '99" is the first basketball game to have play-by-play announcing, just like other big sports titles. Announced by college announcer Quinn Buckner, the statements aren't as repetitive as in other games, but this game seems to have less overall announcing than others. Depending on whether you are a fan of guest announcers or not, this could be a good or bad thing.

Then there's the usual assortment of features we have come to expect from a production company that does only sports games. Real player motion capture, player-controlled instant replays, multiple game angles, injuries, intentional fouls and, of course, every team's fight song and official home and away jerseys.

In the end, what you get is a game that plays and looks great, brandishing all the features necessary to become a sports fan's favorite







