

Dave Matthews Band's new CD returns to old style

CD REVIEW

In 1968, the Beatles let it be. Unhappy with a collection of songs, the Fab Four scrapped their work on "Get Back" and moved forward, only to find — much to their dismay — the album released some two years later.

Thankfully, the Dave Matthews Band didn't make the same mistake.

Sometimes, something so close to greatness is a world away from completion. Pieces lie scattered about, needing only careful consideration and a little caring to turn an abandoned project into a beautiful,

eclectic compilation.

DMB's newest CD, "Busted Stuff," is a piece of work that resembles, at least for the majority of the album, a collection of songs that flaunt sounds of carelessness and discontinuity — the cornerstones of their anti-formula that has attracted the ears of so many.

Unfortunately, "Busted Stuff" comes two years too late. This past year, the band opted to put out the ultra-electric, disappointingly mainstream album "Everyday." In the process, the band shelved the songs heard on the new disc, many of which were intended for release in late 2000. DMB began reworking songs on the album in January, ap-

parently unhappy with their prior work. Matthews rewrote lyrics while the band tinkered with arrangements, and in doing so, produced an exciting, free-flowing album.

Better late than never.

"Raven" jumps off "Busted Stuff" as the band's strongest song. After opening with a peaceful riff, a bass-heavy, drum-laden groove takes hold. Most noticeable are the haunting saxophone solos played by Leroi Moore, which resemble the heckling chime of a bird. Matthews' vocals, sassy and condescending, drive the funky verses while also carrying the song's smooth chorus.

"Raven" transcends as a head-bobbing sing-along despite the underlying lyrical content. Matthews sings: "What you got, what you got in your hand? / A father said the son / I got the whole world here, Daddy / Between my fingers and my thumb." It's then revealed that it would take "10 lifetimes" to undo what's been done. "Raven" is a sad, riveting tale that should rival "Crash Into Me" and "Crush" for notoriety.

The title track, "Busted Stuff," is a catchy tune that, after less than one listen, will leave the chorus in the long-term memory bank. "Captain" serves as the album's jazz track that kindly pleasures the ears while speaking sensually of a rendezvous.

"Grey Street" offers the multitude of sounds that differentiate DMB from other groups, and "Where Are You Going" is a simple, easy to sing love song. "Kit Kat Jam," an instrumental played by the group, unfortunately doesn't jam and is difficult to enjoy. "Big Eyed Fish" is dark and heavy — the kind of song that plagued "Everyday." The lyrics of the song, however, produce an interesting, grass-is-greener tale. "Bartender," a fan favorite when the band is on tour, doesn't get justice at the end of the disc.

Interestingly, DMB has a few Beatles-esque moments on "Busted Stuff." Guitar strumming at the beginning of "You Never Know" strangely resembles the introduction of "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)." The catchy tune

"Grace is Gone" has a lost-love plot and simple chorus that has moments of Paul McCartney.

"Digging a Ditch" proves to be the most thoughtful, introspective song on the album. The chorus is carried lightly in therapeutic form by Moore and coincides brilliantly with the underlying theme. As Matthews sings, the ditch is a place "Where all these troubles weigh down on me will rise / Run to your dreaming when you're alone / Where all these questions / Spinning around my head will die."

The reemergence of DMB's authentic sound is refreshing and, while it's likely not mainstream enough to help "Busted Stuff" overtake sales records of "Everyday," it will satisfy long-time faithful.

And in the end, Dave Matthews Band turned a collection of busted tunes into an album that surpasses the best of what's around.

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Fall of the Third Reich." Shirer, one of "Morrow's Boys," was a correspondent for CBS in Berlin until 1941 and returned to Germany with the victorious Allied troops, where he got an eyeful of captured documents.

Shirer's writing, which is scholarly and very witty at the same time, tells in its more than 1,000 pages the tale of the hideous brutality of the Nazis. But Shirer also writes of the behind-the-scenes power struggles that first catapulted a little-known Austrian painter into power in Germany, and the machinery that kept

him there until the bitter end.

For those who think that the Soviet Union or World War II may still hit too close to home, a good book to read is "The Annals of Imperial Rome," by Publius Cornelius Tacitus. Tacitus wrote an overview of the first five Emperors of Rome. For those not keeping score, they are Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (better known as Caligula), Claudius and Nero.

Tacitus writes in an entrancing, story-telling style that tends to damn with faint praise many of the emperors, especially Tiberius, whom he hated. Although portions are slow reading, dealing with the minutiae of state, there are still riveting ac-

counts of mutinies in the armies, great battles and palace intrigues.

Not all of Tacitus' work survives — the entire portion of the manuscript dealing with Caligula has been missing for centuries, so we don't know if his accounts reach the "over the top" madness and decadence that have been linked with Caligula's name. But the account of Nero more than makes up for the loss with what has to be one of the most bone-headed murder plots ever devised.

There. Didn't I say you'd learn something?

Pat Payne is a freelance columnist. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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