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Linkin Park lacks tune variance

CD review

Chris Steffen

Oklahoma Daily (U. Oklahoma)

NORMAN, Okla. (U-WIRE) -When preparing for a sophomore album from any band, many fans have some apprehension about what to expect. Sometimes the release blows the debut out of the water. Other times, it sinks like a brick.

This album just chooses to float.

"Meteora," the sophomore release from reigning rap-rock kings Linkin Park, is a disappointment and a success at the same time. While it's sure to be a commercial success (sales have already approached one million in the first week), the album breaks no new ground. It shows a band stagnant in its evolution as musicians.

For all one can tell, the songs simply rehash the structure and style of those on "Hybrid Theory," the band's multi-platinum debut. Of course, this means the band will probably have another four or so singles from the album, since its formulaic style and patterns are sure to triumph on rock radio once again.

As with "Hybrid Theory," the only distinctive aspects of the tracks are its hooks, which are undeniably catchy. Almost every song is based on verses of Mike Shinoda's rapping blended with Joseph Hahn's scratching with choruses belted out by Chester Bennington.

The only aspects of the album that are new or inventive for the band are its (or producer Don Gilmore's) choice to implement strings to sweeten some tracks and to experiment with a few different guitar sounds. However, these subtle changes fail to distinguish the album enough to keep it interesting.

Lyrically, the album comes off as rather elementary and trite. The album's first single, "Somewhere I Belong," features the brilliant couplet "I wanna heal / I wanna feel," which makes Fred Durst look like a lyrical genius by comparison. Soaked in angst-riddled melodrama, Bennington sounds as if he tore these lyrics from the diaries of a 15-year-old just learning that life is "tough."

A somewhat different (and humorous) vocal device that Bennington implements on a handful of tracks is taking the choruses of the songs to completion -- then adding a few "surprise" words for emphasis. For example, on one track he exclaims that "I'm breaking the habit," then shocks the listener by explaining that he's going to break this habit "Tonight!" Powerful stuff.

The bottom line is that the album will achieve its goal of going platinum several times over, since most of Linkin Park's fans will undoubtedly eat up what may as well be "Hybrid Theory 2." It's a shame that with their high-profile position and legions of fans that the band members chose not to evolve, deciding instead to drown themselves and their audience in the sameness of 12 (not counting a worthless 13second intro track) painfully similar three-minute songs.

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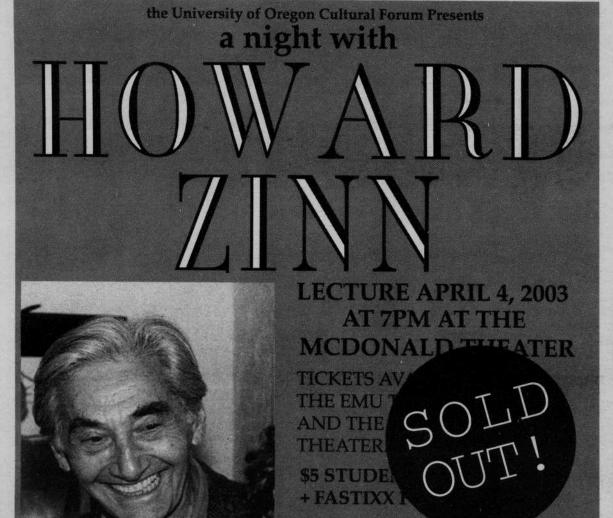
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Minnis

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transportation, educational or governmental institutions could be considered a terrorist. People accused of terrorism under the bill could be subject to 25 years to life in prison.

Senate Bill 742 follows in the footsteps of other state and national bills, like the USA PATRIOT Act, in its efforts to safeguard the nation against terrorism. However, several Oregon senators said the bill goes far beyond earlier definitions of terrorism.

Sen. Charlie Ringo, D-Portland, said in a press release that "the bill defines the crime of terrorism so broadly that it can - without much stretch of the imagination - encompass school food fights, unruly labor strikes or even someone throwing a rock through a window in a protest.'

Members of the ACLU added that the bill would undermine or repeal Oregon's "181" laws - laws that encourage effective law enforcement and protect constitutional rights.

After Sept. 11, 2001, Gov. John Kitzhaber asked the Oregon Attorney General's office to perform a survey of Oregon law and identify areas requiring revision in order to ensure the safety of Oregonians.

During the review, Deputy State Attorney General Peter Shepherd said members of the Attorney General's office asked if changing or revising a law would really make Oregonians safer. In order to change a law, the Attorney General's office determined the change must deter terrorism or give Oregonians further tools to protect themselves from terror.

In applying the same criteria to

Senate Bill 742, Shepherd said all the bill does is re-label existing crimes as terrorism.

Will re-labeling crimes make us safer?" said Shepherd. "We don't think it does. Creating a new crime of terrorism will not necessarily make us any safer."

University Students for Peace member Sarah Charlesworth said she believes the passage of Senate Bill 742 would only serve to further restrict civil rights already under attack by anti-terrorism legislation.

"If you're afraid to act because you fear imprisonment, then you are not free to act," Charlesworth said. "Senate Bill 742 gives the government a more insidious form of power over citizens - less overt, but more powerful. Senate Bill 742 tries to instill a sense of fear so people won't express their opposition or their support for government actions."

Holly Cooper, a legislative assistant to Sen. Minnis, said Minnis was not trying to do away with freedom of speech.

'He doesn't want to do away with the First Amendment," Cooper said. "But protesters are out in the street doing just what they say they are against. They are behaving violently, throwing things at cops and causing \$200,000 in damage a day."

Minnis has prepared several amendments to Senate Bill 742, but has yet to schedule another public hearing.

For the full text of Senate Bill 742, www.leg.state.or.us/03reg/measures/sb0700.dir/sb0742.intro.html.

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