

**IEEE/HKN Banquet
Thursday, April 27th**

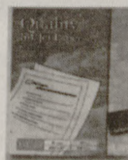
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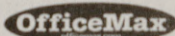
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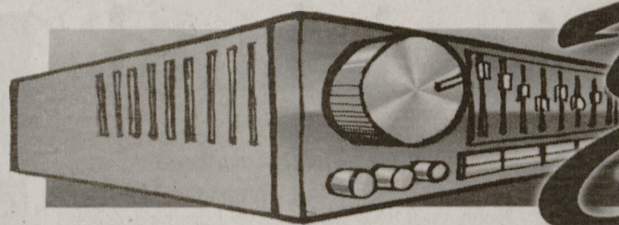
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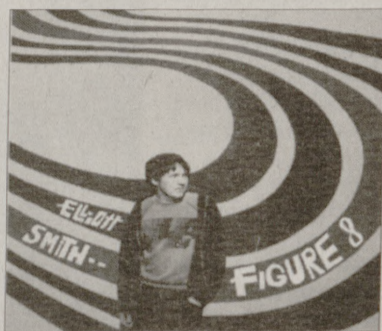
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THE BATTALION

Wednesday



Volume Control



**Elliott Smith
Figure 8**

CD courtesy of Dreamworks Records

On *Figure 8*, Elliott Smith's follow up to his acclaimed 1998 album *XO*, he croons, "I've got a long way to go/getting further away."

After listening to Smith's latest effort, one realizes that nothing could be further from the truth. All the way through *Figure 8* the listener gets the impression that Smith has finally found some confidence

and security to match his talent. That's not to say Smith is any happier than before — his lyrics are still drenched in the imagery of broken relationships and lost dreams. But, in typical Smith style, he pulls off the pain with beautifully laid vocals and graceful guitar playing. And therein lies another evolution of Elliott Smith. With *Figure 8*, he has moved away from his once irreplaceable acoustic guitar and now almost every song features the electric version.

Nonetheless, Smith delivers a solid, well crafted album by capturing the best aspects from each his four previous albums. Fans of the older, acoustic Smith found on his first three albums will softly hum along to tunes like "Somebody I Used to Know," "Everything Reminds me of Her" and "I Better be Quiet Now." Meanwhile, those that enjoyed the foot-tapping Beatle-esque tunes of *XO* will be pressing for the repeat button after hearing songs like "Song of Sam," "Happiness" and "In the Lost and Found."

Smith is the complete singer-songwriter. Gone are the days of choked up folk driven ballads recorded on a four

track in his basement. He now is on display with full backing instrumentation and songs that hint at self-confidence. With *Figure 8* Smith's done more than release another solid album, he has found his place in the cannon of modern music. (Grade: A)

— Eric Dickens



**No Doubt
Return of Saturn**

CD courtesy of Interscope

No Doubt was a punk/ska band. Their new single, "Ex-girlfriend," seems to have some of this old school attitude. The rest of *Return of Saturn* is any, of their old style at all.

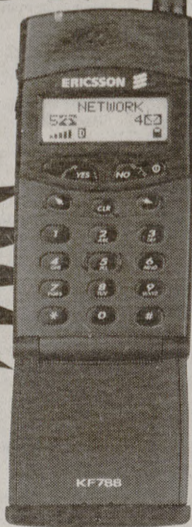
Except for "Magic" in the album which is head and shoulders above the rest of the slow tracks on the album, most of these songs, are forgettable. "Magic" is vibrant and just like "Ex-girlfriend." Unfortunately, the album delivers only a few ear-tunes mixed with many sub-par tracks that don't hold the listener's attention. Also on this album is "New Beat" single from the film *Go*.

No Doubt needs to find a new source of inspiration or break up because the band is running out of steam and energy.

No Doubt fans may want to skip this album out, but don't expect the pace of their previous albums. Any good songs from this album will be played on the radio anyway. (Grade: C)

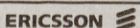
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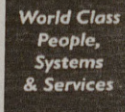


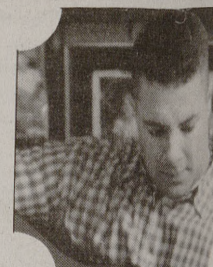
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