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VOLUME Control

Rascal Flatts
Melt

Lyric Street Records

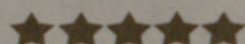
Often, when you buy an album based on the popularity of the first single, you find that the rest of the album is nothing like that first cut. However, this is not the case with Rascal Flatts' sophomore album *Melt*.

The first single off the album, "These Days," has shot up the country music charts and currently sits at number six on the *Billboard* country singles chart. The 10 other cuts on the new album have the potential to follow in this single's success.

The members of Rascal Flatts have young, pop, boy band good looks and smooth harmonies that border on being too good. The band capitalizes on these assets and combines them with a pleasing, albeit almost too commercial, sound and amazing lyrics to make an outstanding album.

Noteworthy cuts off the album are the clever "Too Good Is True" and powerful "Shine On." The song "Mayberry" will make anyone stop and think as they speak of the world spinning fast and how "Sunday was a day of rest / now its one more day for progress."

The only drawback to this album is that it falls short of being a full hour in length. It leaves you wanting more of the group's vocal talents and emotional songs.



—Denise Schoppe

Oasis
Heathen Chemistry
Epic Records

Although Oasis is probably one of the most forgotten bands from the nineties—surge of anti-grunge acts, the fact remains that it is home to two of the most intriguing personalities known to rock—the Gallagher brothers. The band seems to have temporarily left its never-ending differences behind to create its fifth studio album *Heathen Chemistry*.

With a new drummer and guitarist in the line up, Oasis has created its most polished of albums to date. Front man Liam Gallagher uses sporadic vocals on the collection of tunes with Beatlesque melodies and mesmerizing guitar hooks. The track "The Hindu Times" has a confusing title, but is a gem on the disc, with the force of an arena anthem that could put any Brit pop detractor to shame.

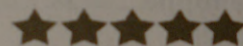
The song "Stop Crying Your Heart Out" is an almost ridiculously emotional tune on the disc, but its sincerity is a welcome release from the "Wonderwall"-type songs of the past. The fact that older brother Noel vocalizes for the first time in the band's nine-year history makes this album stand out from other Oasis creations.

"She is Love" and "Little By Little" are two remarkable tracks that Noel lends his voice to and are proof that a great injustice was done to the world by keeping his voice under wraps all this time.

"Born On A Different Cloud" and "Hung In A Bad Place" are other tracks on the album that

will invoke the listeners to push their repeat button.

Heathen Chemistry is a collection of tunes that are very British and very hard to resist. Even though each track is different, they come together with the common element of splendour. If there was ever an album from a nineties band that had fallen out of favor and deserves a second chance, it should definitely be Oasis.



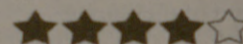
—Nishar Feroz

The Vines
Highly Evolved
Capitol Records

Much can be said about Aussie rockers The Vines, whom the British music press hailed as the best rock band since Nirvana. Their new CD *Highly Evolved*, signals the return of grand rock energy. The album has a sound reminiscent of Nirvana-style garage rock mixed with The Beatles, Smashing Pumpkins and Oasis. *Highly Evolved* shows The Vines have all the necessary ingredients to become the new age front men in grunge: the flamboyantly-clever lyrics, scorching looks and devil-may-care attitude.

Front man Craig Nicholls is the mastermind behind the album, taking advantage of his versatile voice and penning the 12 witty songs on the record that he told MTV "are little paintings to look at." The title track, a 94-second-long, catchy-but-mellow paced ditty opens the CD. The tune "Outathaway" is a great song, but raises some serious questions of anger management for the band. The radio hit single "Get Free" makes listeners want to play their air guitar. Nicholls' burning desire to become the new Kurt Cobain is extremely obvious on the track "Sunshinin'" with vocals directly reminiscent of the *Nevermind*-era Nirvana songs such as "Something in the way" and "In Bloom." The sublime track "Homesick" is a testament to the variety on the disc, with calm vocals and subdued guitar riffs.

It would be very tricky to rate this album lower than a great mix of a wide variety of influences. Although Nicholls may have definite icon potential, *Highly Evolved* shows that he has a long way to go before achieving Kurt Cobain's misunderstood genius status that was so critical to Nirvana's success. But grunge was never about a clever mixing of different sounds anyway.



—Nishar Feroz

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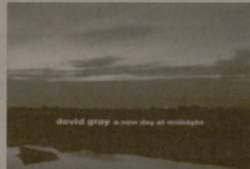
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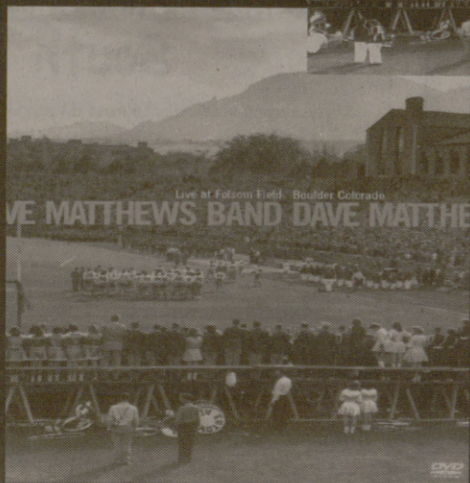
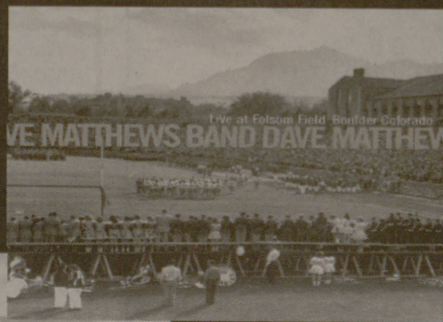
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