



Listening to The Offspring is like watching an episode of "Full House." While the band's sound may grow and age, its music and message always stays the same. From frat-tastic party anthems to power cord-driven musings about life on the street, The Offspring tends to stick to its roots with every new CD, alternating styles ever so slightly. As "Splinter," the latest release from The Offspring shows, dedication to one's roots isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Cal angst as only The Offspring can deliver. From the opening pulse of "Neocon," in which lead singer Dexter Holland screams "We are strong/ We are right/ We won't be pushed aside/ We'll go on/ We will fight/ We will not compromise," listeners are pushed forward through the alternative punk landscape garden which The Offspring has helped sow. The band goes on, delivering hit after hit on its latest CD. From the radio hit, "Hit That," complete with a sound that can only be compared to a techno beat from classic Nintendo games, to "Da Hui," an island-inspired heavy hitter song, The Offspring manages to deliver fresh sounds even into its seventh album.

Even though many of the CD's songs deal with personal themes, not all of "Splinter's" songs are dedicated to serious subjects. The band's trademark humor remains intact in "The Worst Hangover Ever," a tongue-in-cheek take on the aftereffects of drinking, and "When You're in Prison," a funky retro tune with helpful advice on any potential stays in federal prison.

In what has now become a trademark edition of the band's albums,

enhanced features for the computer hard drive listener are also available. Music videos and MP3s, including a haunting island-style performance of "The Kids Aren't Alright," are included in the enhanced program.

Alas, all things must end and unfortunately "Splinter" ends all too soon. Clocking in at only thirty-two minutes, the CD is far too short. With the decreased time length, the powerful ballads prominent on The Offspring's earlier albums are also gone. Instead, album listeners are treated to equally likeable radio-play friendly songs that are an excellent addition to any road trip. Offspring fans will not be disappointed by any of the album's fine songs and newcomers are highly recommended to check out "Splinter," an excellent tribute to a great band that promises staying power with every new CD.

★★★★★

- Robert Saucedo

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