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FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2011

## The Hitchers - "Tees Valley Deadbeats" CD Review (Spectra Records)



UK punkabilly band The Hitchers, who sound like the bastard love child of Squeeze and the Stray Cats, released their first domestic disc, *Tees Valley Deadbeats*, earlier this year (Spectra Records). The band quoted "We've been playing our own style of punk rock'n'roll, with the ambition to capture the infectious buzz of punk rock with the fun and style of the 1950s rock 'n' roll years." While this disc was previously available only as an import, the band and their music aren't strangers to the American shores as they have been written up in Kerrang and toured across the US on multiple years of Warped Tours.

Given that The Hitchers are a three-piece band with a stand-up bass and "Slim Jim Phantom" style drum kit, this leads to an immediate comparison to the Stray Cats but The Hitchers push beyond the Cats' greaser rockabilly sound. Singer/guitarist Ritchie has a smooth, melodic voice that is closer to Glenn Tilbrook than Brian Setzer and the band frequently sings in multi-part harmony which gives many of the songs a 50's doo-wop feel. The band even goes into Beach Boys style vocals on "Wasted (And I'm Living Proof)" where the upbeat vocal harmonies mask dark lyrics.

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When the band is channeling the Stray Cats, they have both the hooks and the swing that the Stray Cats used to take the US by storm with *Rant N' Rave*. Some of the stand-out tracks are "Shake Ruby UB" (which has a "Rock This Town" style vibe), "Anti-Protest Song" (which gets a bit more into Clash territory) and the disc's leadoff track "Bop Til U Drop". The band moves into power-punk (ala Green Day) territory with "Berwick Hills 90210" which features some slashing guitar work from Ritchie and a nice drum lead-in from Mikey. The band breaks out their 50's Rock n' Roll influences with some serious doo-wop harmonies on "Rum to Talk to You" and "Me & London" and "Rotten Baby", where this last track combines Chris Isaac style "crooner" vocals with exquisite multi-part harmonies. This is a disc that really needs to be heard and the stylistic touch points mentioned above only scratch the surface of the band's sonic repertoire.

In a '09 interview with Metromix, the band was asked: *"What's next for The Hitchers, as far as recording, touring, etc.?"*

**The Hitchers:** *"Wait and see. Hopefully more of both. "Tees Valley Deadbeats" is going to be released in the States soon, so hopefully lots more shows on Randall Island (referring back to a '05 Warped Tour show) with boobs."*

#### Links:

The Hitchers

POSTED BY MIKE AT 9:04 PM

LABELS: CD REVIEW, SQUEEZE, STRAY CATS, THE HITCHERS

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