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The Hitchers

Tees Valley Deadbeats

Review by Gary Hill

The Hitchers owe a lot to rockabilly. It's certainly one of their biggest influences. Of course, there is also a lot of punk rock in the mix, too. While many acts would stop there, though, The Hitchers add other sounds and leanings to create something that is wholly unique, but touches on familiar sounds. Sure, there are songs that are quite similar to the Stray Cats, but there are other songs that are worlds apart from that. All in all, this is quite an entertaining disc. It should be mentioned that it definitely earns a parental advisory label, though.



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Track by Track Review

Bop Til U Drop!

Imagine The Stray Cats jamming with The Clash. It might sound very similar to this. This is a smoking hot bouncing number. It's very British and there are even some Beatles links on some of the vocals.

Teesside Graffiti

Although there are some random voices and some siren sounds, this is a roughly minute long drum solo that leads into the next cut.

Berwick Hills 90210

That Stray Cats sound, with a bit more of a hard rock edge, dominates this killer tune. It's a lot of fun.

Shake Ruby Ub

There's a smoking old school rock and roll walking bass line driving this. It really brings the most definite Stray Cats reference yet. In some ways it really feels like "Rock This Town." This is a smoking hot rockabilly jam.

Rum to Talk to You

Here's another that's well rooted in old school rock and roll. In fact, this is the closest to the true original rockabilly of anything we've heard so far. There's some incredibly tasty guitar work present and it's just a really fun cut.

I Might Never

Bass starts this and the vocals come in only accompanied by that bass and a sparse percussion line. The arrangement grows very gradually. Then it powers out just before the one minute mark and this feels like an old school balladic piece with a bit of a modern edge. It's a great change of pace and feels quite retro. All in all, this is a fairly stripped down arrangement.

Rum

Here's a retro styled hard rocker that again calls to mind "Rock This Town." The bridge though, is an unusual little twist that feels like something The Who might have done in their "Mod" era.



Rotten Baby

The sounds of a radio dial being tuned give way to an acapella arrangement. This has that old school rock and roll sound in it, but it's also got a lot of jazz trio built into the arrangement. It's a cool tune that's a bit of a change, while still feeling like it is an integral part of The Hitchers' sound. The vocal arrangement really steals the show on this. There are really a number of interesting twists and turns where it applies to that vocal arrangement.

Weekend

This eschews the rockabilly sounds for an arrangement that's more like the really dramatic music that came from some hard rocking bands of the 1960s. Yes, it's still retro, but more modern than the sounds of a lot of the disc. That said, it still feels like it fits here. This is a great change and one of the highlights of the set.

Me and London

Here The Hitchers turn their talents to their version of a Doo-Wop tune. I've never been a fan of Doo-Wop, and for that reason I'm not overly crazy about this. Still, they create enough twists and turns in the piece to keep it interesting.

Anti-Protest Song

OK, you have to love any song with a title like "Anti-Protest Song." Or, should I say that you have to anti-hate it? There's more of a punk rock vibe to this, but there are also some hints of something like The Mamas and the Papas, but with more of an energy and raw aggressive texture. This is an intriguing cut. It has a smoking hot guitar solo.

Wasted, And I'm Living Proof

Back in the world of old school rock and roll, the vocal arrangement on the chorus calls to mind The Beach Boys.

Baby Bought a Shotgun

More pure rockabilly is presented here, but it's a safe bet that the rather explicitly vulgar (but funny) lyrics would never have passed the censors in the days when this musical style prevailed.

The Chemist

This one comes in along the punk, nearly metal lines in a lot of ways. Sure, there's plenty of rockabilly on hand, too, but overall, it's got a lot more aggressive nature than rockabilly alone would convey.



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