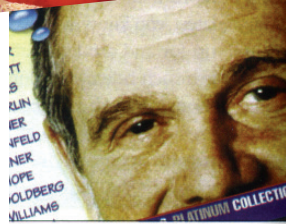


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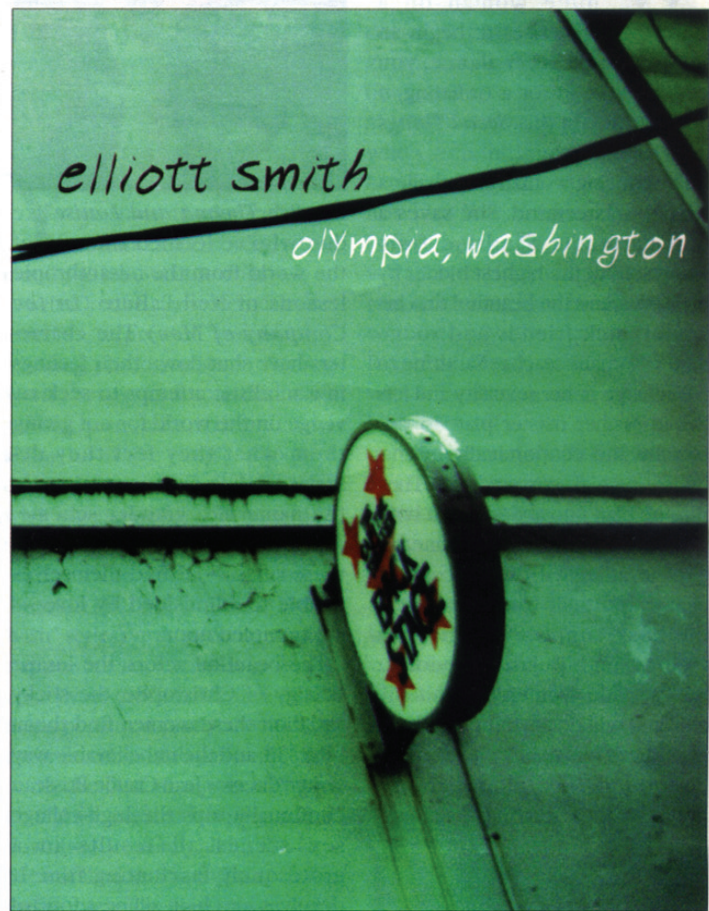
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Date - November 16, 2004

Video Store
Magazine
October 2004



Elliott Smith: Olympia, Washington

Prebook 11/2; Street 11/30
Music Video Distributors, Music, \$16.95
DVD only, NR.

Smith may not sound as polished as he would a short year later, when joined by a newly formed backing band, but here are the seeds of genius. "Son of Sam," "Division Day," "Stupidity Tries," "Easy Way Out": His early greats are all here, sounding still in their infancy, Smith's voice as tenuous and delicate as ever.

The performance is not what one might expect from a now-legendary songwriter, complete with forgotten lyrics, mistakes and greetings to his sisters, but the intimacy and lack of overproduction only add to the already intense vibe of Smith's music.

There, on stage, alone with only his guitar to guard him from the audience that he clearly still views with trepidation, the tragic circumstances of his death (a possible suicide by stabbing) seem to already haunt his face and music.

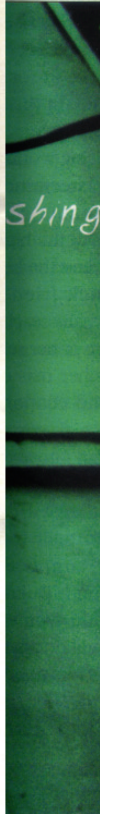
The passionate source of his lyrics and his blossoming gift as a songwriter are as plain on his face as they are in his chord progressions and haunting melodies.

What may surprise some, though, is just how similar Smith is to the thousands of other openmic singers across the states — still unsure of himself, never quite hitting the songs (or guitar strings) exactly right. That he would become so much more influential and professional within a few years makes the set even more fascinating — what was that special something that separates him from the other starving artists? Whatever it was, it's here.

SELLING POINTS: Little more than a few angles of a man with a guitar, *Elliot Smith: Olympia, Washington* is strictly for fans, though Smith's songs should be palatable to almost anyone. Thankfully, Smith has more fans now than he did while alive, and his legacy, sharing much in common with the equally haunted Nick Drake, seems destined to evolve despite his death.

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