

## Almada *Almada*



by Celena Carr

www.myspace.com/thearkroyal

Somehow four guys from Massachusetts who grew up (musically speaking) on metal have produced a pop album. Driven by the sweet tenor of the band's lead singer, Jon Harrington, the sound is like a mashup of Fountains of Wayne and Weezer.

It's easy to see why pop is so appealing, with the seemingly quick rises to stardom of former nobodies. Unfortunately there are a million nobodies fighting for that one glimmering spotlight, and while Almada may be sporting a few catchy tunes and a former model (drummer Al Bigelow), it

might not be enough to get them past the velvet rope.

What's missing from their self-titled album is that sticky factor that keeps a song running through your head all day that makes you buy the single off of iTunes, or flip the radio dial in desperate search of it, even though you've heard it a million times already. There is nothing truly awful on the album, nor is there any stand-out material.

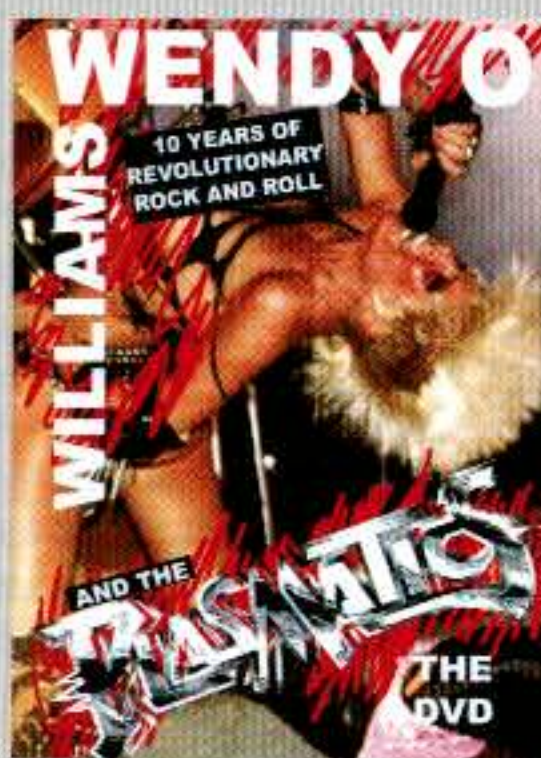
Fans of pop-rock will appreciate the upbeat, simple guitar-driven anthems, but vocals and guitar compete too much for

prominence (perhaps under the influence of all those former metal bands), and the melodies are easily lost as a result. Trite lyrics and over-production have also rendered Harrington's voice more mandroid than human, another major pitfall of the album. Local fans, or fans of the genre may take note, but the bottom line is that there's better stuff out there.

*At press time, the band had changed its name to Ark Royal. As far as we know, they still sound the same. — ed.*

## Wendy O. Williams and the Plasmatics *The DVD*

PANDEMONIUM MERCHANDISING



by Iris Karasick

www.mvdb2b.com

Wendy O. Williams and the Plasmatics have quite a history and an iconic status in rock history. If you have absolutely no idea who she or the Plasmatics are, no sweat: this DVD is an extremely detailed biography, detailed all the way down to visuals of a typed sheet of paper listing her life history. It's very informative and spells out exactly what the band stood for and what they did not approve of.

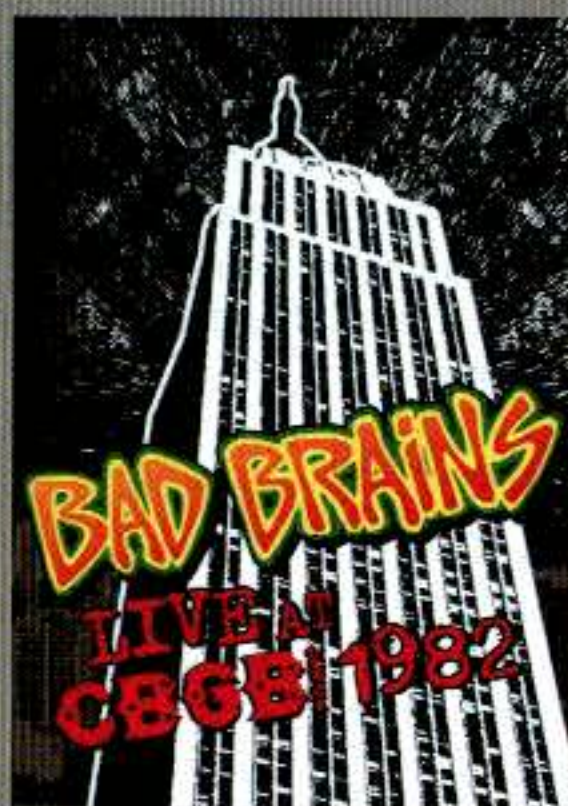
However, it does not come off as the most trustworthy material. The splices during the interviews are blatantly obvious and allow

for a significant amount of doubt about how much of this biography is truthful. The people who are interviewed—ranging from ex-radio hosts, former sound engineers, the band and friends—all have massively positive things to say. Obviously they aren't going to put scathing reviews on their DVD, but it's just questionable when the people interviewed (who offer nothing but raving reviews) are chopped up for possibly artistic effect; instead it just looks silly.

There is a lot to learn about the Plasmatics, and this really does

the group and Wendy O. Williams justice. She's the most hardcore rocker who probably ever graced the music scene. The narrator (though monotonous) constantly reiterates this, between her own words and reading quotes from every magazine and radio station who shared their opinion over the years. Wikipedia better have this listed as a must-see, because while it's certainly an information overload, it's a true tribute.

## Bad Brains *Live at CBGBs 1982*



by Iris Karasick

www.badbrains.com

For starters, you get to see CBGBs so that in itself makes this worthy of a look. Second, it's from 1982; we all know the fashion craze back then. Third, if you're not familiar with Bad Brains, their lead singer is African American and not to stereotype, but how often do you see African Americans sing and dance to punk rock and reggae in the same show? Unless you own and spin this DVD daily, probably never.

Bad Brains' *Live at CBGBs 1982* truly proves the legend true: their shows are outrageous. The crowd

is visibly insane. All different races, even kids are there, dancing on stage with the band; they hold nothing back. It's definitely an entertaining watch. When they are able to turn the crowd and themselves from exerting 100% of their energy during their faster, harder punk songs into a much slower, jammin' reggae groove, it's truly amazing to see. Even seeing the punkiest of punks in their awesome flannel shirts chilling to reggae is incredible. And the next beat, watching a guy in a suit jump onto the crowd is hilarious.

All that said, unless you are a true punk rock aficionado or mega fan of Bad Brains, this DVD might not be for you. The lyrics are unintelligible, the songs are all over the place, the sound quality is awful and there isn't a single person at this show, in the band or crowd that can dance. It's a mess and it's a Bad Brains show, recorded.