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The Bellrays

@ the Barfly (Punkervision)
by Brian Varney

The Bellrays are the sort of band for whom the greatest obstacle of making records has been trying to capture the fury of the live show. It would seem that a live DVD would be the ultimate Bellrays release. That was my expectation, and I was very excited when this arrived in my mailbox.

So why don't I like this more? In spite of the "Not as good as the live show" reputation which the records have garnered, I quite enjoyed the band's second and third releases, *Let It Blast* and *Grand Fury*. The most recent Bellrays release, *The Red, White & Black*, was a bit of a disappointment, with more overt nods to the band's avant-garde and noise flirtations and less of the raging rock and roll which made me love the band in the first place. @ *the Barfly*, recorded as it was in April 2005, understandably draws most heavily from *RW&B*, and there are even a handful of new songs in the same vein. So although the band rages as hard as ever, I think it's the reliance on material with which I'm not particularly enamored that keeps this from scaling the heights which I expected.

If you happen to like the newer Bellrays material, you'll no doubt love this release. It's a well-recorded, multi-camera affair, with the band in fine form, and it's captured in a relatively intimate London club, so everything is as up close and personal as possible. The requisite bonus feature is an interview with the individual band members that all but the most devoted fans can probably skip. (www.punkervision.net)



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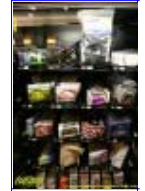
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