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Hytest - Dishing Out The Good Times

Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**

When I moved to Albuquerque after a lifetime on the East Coast, the running joke was that New Mexico was about 10 years behind, especially in fashion. Seeing people still pegging their jeans in the late '90s demonstrated a certain amount of cultural insulation, or maybe it was just the distance from either coast that created some trend lag. **Hytest** hails from Australia, one of the more isolated and remote parts of the developed world, which may explain why their record **Dishing Out The Good Times** sounds like a pastiche of musical styles that were current a decade ago. These fellows are good musicians, without a doubt, but there's absolutely nothing on this record that will turn heads on our side of the pond.



Dishing Out The Good Times should really lead with its final track, "Ramblings of a Mute." This instrumental actually sounds more original than anything else on the record, and lets you know that you aren't dealing with hacks. The follow-up track to this should have been "Crazy For You," with its staggered song structure that feeds a thrashing chorus to a chunky, bouncy verse, with interesting results. The perfect demo tape or EP would finish up with "Smokeskull" and perhaps some remixes, but **Hytest** stacks up a total of 8 other songs here, most of them imminently forgettable. Whether they are channeling the likes of *Pantera* and *Nirvana*, **Hytest** is always channeling something. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, any number of artists can feel highly appreciated by **Hytest**. Whether audiences feel the same about **Hytest** is another question.

There are some elements of garage punk in the simplistic approach that **Hytest** takes to crafting its lyrics; they aren't going for depth, and sometimes seem to be singing with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. Where these guys part ways from the typical garage band is that they are extremely well produced and play their instruments with some real facility. Looking through the rosiest glasses I can muster, **Dishing Out The Good Times** sounds like what we wish corporate rock actually sounded like. You won't hear sounds like this on the radio, but **Hytest** falls short of the raw power needed to earn respect from fans of US hardcore and metal bands. Even old *Rage Against the Machine* would sound contemporary next to **Hytest**, especially when you have songs like "Girl in Black" and "Take Ya Money" on **Dishing Out The Good Times**. If you think the latter two songs are about anything other than what their titles suggest, you would be incorrect.

Awkward copies of musical styles are often cute when they repackage things we thought we knew in some surprising way, as with a band like *Shonen Knife*. Nothing about **Hytest** really sounds "Australian," so we're left with what would be a good cover band here in the states. Perhaps the band will find its way and decide which of its many obvious influences will predominate by the time they get together to record their next record. For now, **Dishing Out The Good Times** is unlikely to find an audience outside of areas where culture is still transmitted via passenger pigeon and pony express.

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