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[H2O/Live August 19, 2002 at CBGBs: MVD Audio](#)

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Meaty sounding without being meatheaded (think along the lines of Cause for Alarm, partly because both singers can sing without a larynx made from sandpaper or juiced on truck loads of steroids!), this New York school of hardcore heroes unleash their anthemic hardcore by harnessing unhindered singalong style mosh music (just sample the savory “Role Model” with ample breakdowns and soaring back-ups) for the tattooed flocks. Stated in their own bio, they are able to snag elements from both the Cro-Mags and the Descendents — a mixology cued in on melody and crushing crunch, a rare kind of agility in the age of stainless steel cookie cutter jock-infested aggro that ran rampant during their late 1990’s heyday. True enough. As the bands attests throughout the recording, CBGBs was hotter than a steam spewing boiler room during this rambunctious, rippling set of songs, made even more pronounced by the band’s pugnacious worldwide call-outs (“F.T.T.W”) that produce feverish audience responses. Dig their barely corked, tightly wrenched thunder pop (“Memory Lane”) that seemingly serves as a prelude to the style of recent Dropkick Murphys, harkening to a time when old punks reminisce about people and plans, spelling out a kind of prolonged commitment to bearing the hard truths of living for some core truths even as the scene fades, epitomized by lyrics like, “As I fumble through my lines/Tripping wires in my mind/There’s a script that failed the breach and I’m ready.” Musically, don’t expect routine fare: the band has well-grooved technique, so even the steady assault of “Spirit of ‘84” comes across as fleet-footed and fierce (listen to that blazing, limber-wristed, machine gun mounted hi hat!), just as their evocations of tough nights in the East Village revealed in “Guilt by Association” portray a man trying to navigate the pratfalls of being lumped in with friends making the wrong choices. They might have skipped from label to label, from Blackout to Epitaph to MCA, but this disc highlights the true home turf ingrained in the heart of the band.

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