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Grounders, *Wreck of a Smile* EP (3.5/5)



As we moved into the second decade of this millennium, alternative rock started to make a stronger impact on the charts. Bands such as Foster the People, Gotye, and Fun started to gain mainstream attention. As popular music has started to stray towards band-oriented indie rock, Grounders could not have picked a better time to release their debut EP, *Wreck of a Smile*.

“Grand Prize Drawl” kicks off the album, and immediately you are surrounded by a swirling mass of reverb-soaked instruments, sounding

similar to the indie rock of Youth Lagoon. Following this exciting intro comes arpeggiated guitar chords with a driving beat, reminiscent of folk-rockers such as Mumford and Sons and Of Monsters and Men. This unique sound of reverb-ridden, keyboard infused, and melodically pleasing riffs sets the tone for the tunes to come. Following this song comes one of the standout tracks on the EP, “Along the Line.” The seemingly stuttered beat along with the reverb drenched keyboards accent the brilliance of the guitar melody, while unforgettable riffs and outstanding vocals are sure to be stuck in your head.

What is so spectacular about this band is the way they are able to experiment with some interesting sounds while remaining catchy enough for the typical music listener. This can be heard in the closing song, “Speedboats.” With a snapping snare drum, sliding bass line, and delayed picking that creates the illusion of many guitars, this band definitely will keep you intrigued. But while their music experiments, this song also has an easy to learn vocal melody with memorable guitar riffs, a combination that would fit right in with the top charts.

*Wreck of a Smile* ensures a bright future for these five Canadians. This EP does exactly what you want a debut project to do: create a niche sound. Grounders have all the elements of a mainstream indie band while pushing the boundaries of rock music. At times, it truly does seem like this band has a place on the radio. However, their unique sound will not get lost among the thousands of other bands out there conforming to the latest trend. *Wreck of a Smile* has something for those of you who listen to Top 40 music, and something for those of you who wouldn't be caught dead with your radio on.

Favorite track: Along the Line

Reviewed by: Nathan Zucker

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