



EMPRESS HOTEL

Heavy Halo

(Written By: Jeffrey Kurtis)

The re-introduction of retro-vibed pop music into the mainstream has slowly been happening over the past couple of years with some bands finding huge success with only a tweak here or there to modernize the familiar sound from yesteryear. For New Orleans based Empress Hotel, they pull together harmonies and the feel of the 80's alternative/pop sound with ease on their latest release *Heavy Halo*, but how does it sustain from top to bottom? For my personal tastes, I am not a fan of the synth heavy sounds but when Empress Hotel turns things to an up-tempo feel as they do from the get go with album opener "Mach Bach," I can't help but find myself bopping along. However, from here the album tends to stay in a mid-tempo range with songs like "Drugs" and "Last Picture Show," and because of staying in that safe zone they unfortunately lose me when they never quite recapture that up-tempo vibe that set the tone with the album opener. Songs like the title track "Heavy Halo" or album closer "Lonely Soul," add a way too heavy, 80's dance vibe to their otherwise pop feel and had me hitting the skip button. Upbeat is clearly what this band does best, but rather than continue to pull you into the album by keeping you moving and bopping along with it, they opt to slow things down to stay in the middle of the road throughout the majority of this album making this fall flat after the initial excitement. Unless you are a huge fan of a pure 80's style performed by a modern band, then I would say to take a pass on this one.