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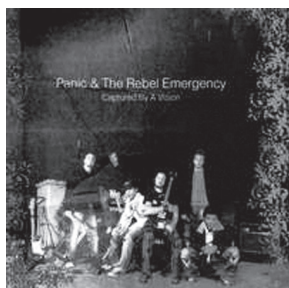
albumreview

No No Zero
Rough Stuff
Signed by Force

SARAH STEAD
Arts & Entertainment Writer

No No Zero wants fornication, penetration, stimulation, and masturbation, and they're not offering any explanation. Using members from Toronto-based punk act The Exploders, No No Zero is a hybrid of garage-rock and punk, and their album, *Rough Stuff*, is unapologetically crass. At its core, the album is unambiguously about all things raunchy, sexual, and taboo.

Singer Pius Priapus sounds like a sinister vocal incarnation of the B-52s Fred Schneider—but Priapus' love shack has no doors. True to punk tradition, most songs are under two minutes long, and several don't even crack the one-minute mark. The opening track, "Beat the Shit Out of Me," is a plea for domination and pain, while "Screw" is a lament about how masturbation keeps men



albumreview

Rebel Emergency
Rebel Emergency
Independent

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN
Arts & Entertainment Staff

"There's no boundaries for your thoughts / Let your mind wander far away / You can be in New York or LA / Let your mind wander far away"

The feelings obtained when you listen to Rebel Emergency's inappropriately self-titled EP can be summed up by the opening track's ("Wander Far Away") lyrics. There's no sense of panic or urgency here, but rather relaxation and liberation.

In 2005, Toronto rock band Rebel Emergency teamed up with New York

producer/engineer Panic. Together, they formed Panic & the Rebel Emergency and released *Captured by a Vision*, an album that mixed rock, reggae, and ska so well that someone from the Jamaican Star took notice. Panic eventually left the band, but you wouldn't know while listening to this record: half of the tracks on the EP, including "Wander Far Away," "Here I Am," and "Walk On By," were taken from *Captured by a Vision*.

With the majority of tracks being on the reggae and ska side of things,

and women from having enough sex. "Uschi" is a song musing about Uschi Digard, a Swedish former soft-core porn star, model, and actress, and "Brown Shower" is about, well, it need not be said.

The album is pure id—not one desire is left unexplored or unexploited. Though many of the tracks are quite funny and the lyrics are dangerously catchy, the graphic subject matter is the ultimate example of too much information—but that said, there's a strangely enjoyable quality in the subversiveness. No No Zero hold nothing back, and half of the fun is delighting in the fact that you know you shouldn't be listening to this album. *Rough Stuff* should be approached with caution, a wide open mind, and probably a pair of rubber gloves.

a song like "Ghost & Angels" would normally stick out like a sore thumb, given its leanings towards soft rock. However, Roddy Soul's smooth vocals, along with the sprinkling of reggae and neat guitar work by Geoff Star, who turns jazz seamlessly into classic rock, provide enough originality to prevent it from seeming out of place—though it is a little slow. Things are back on the upbeat with "Honest," in which the drums are the main appeal. Meanwhile, "Juvenile" faces the same problem as "Ghost & Angels" by being too mellow for an otherwise lively album. Aside from the reggae choruses, nothing much helps to make this song any more excitable. Going from "Honest" to "Juvenile" is like becoming alert after taking a high dose of caffeine, only to be sluggish again after an hour or so. Make "Honest" the last track, and *Rebel Emergency* would melt all your troubles away.



albumreview

Johnny Hollow
Dirty Hands
The Orange Record Label

KELSEY TANASIUK
Arts & Entertainment Staff

One might not expect great things when they first pick up from *Dirty Hands* by the Canadian band Johnny Hollow. With a goth-pretentious (though still really pretty) cover and a unfamiliar band name, the common prediction would likely be overly angsty Evanesence rip-offs. However, you'd be surprised by the quality of the album that these Ontario rockers deliver.

The first track, "Alchemy," immediately transports you to the strange world depicted on the CD's front cover; it's Tim

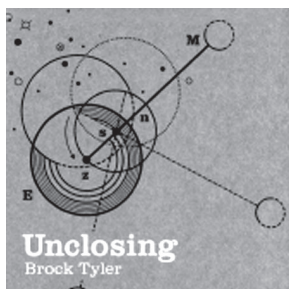
Burton-esque in all the best ways: mysterious, dark, and ever-so-charming.

As the tracks fly by, the vocals alternate between male and female voices, both equally hypnotizing. Rich and decadent cello and piano flow through the album, giving it that extra air of mystery and intrigue, like a gothier version of Goldfrapp—or a mellower version of Shiny Toy Guns, only with an accompanying orchestra. In addition to all this, the storytelling element in songs like "Worse Things"

means that Johnny Hollow show that not only do they have the instrumental and vocal aspects of their craft mastered, but the lyrical aspect to soon to be completely conquered as well.

Also, should that band leave you wanting more in this imaginative dark fantasy world they create, their websites deliver an extra treat. Designed by the band's own Vincent Marcone, their vivid home on the web will delight fans of fantasy films like *Pan's Labyrinth*. With a separate site for each album, Johnny Hollow's online designs are both beautiful and curious, with a steampunk lean, demanding the visitor answer riddles to progress further through the website.

With all this to offer, it's obvious the boy and girls who make up Johnny Hollow don't have imagination in short supply. Full of talent and promise, we can expect big, exciting things from this Canadian trio.



albumreview

Brock Tyler
Unclosing
Hopeful Heartful Music

DAVID JOHNSTON
Arts & Entertainment Staff

On his website, Brock Tyler notes without a hint of irony that his favourite listener comment about his debut album, *Unclosing*, is that it "works wonders for putting children to sleep." I can't elaborate on that. That sentence tells you everything you'll need to know about *Unclosing*.

Tyler is a local artist who writes his own songs, thanks his grandmother in his album lining, and has perhaps the most creative disc packaging I've unwrapped this year, all of which

earn him huge props. The record has a definite and intentional soft acoustic feel to it. So I've got no problems with Brock Tyler (producer) and Brock Tyler (lyricist). But I find myself at odds with Brock Tyler (singer), sadly, who performs the entire album in a soft, languid monotone that half the time gets drowned out by the orchestrals.

Not that increased tempo or crazy riffs are necessary to make a successful song. But a hint of emotion

would be nice once in a while. All too often, Tyler seems to be content with simply hitting the notes and letting them sit there, rather than using them to express any feelings or pathos.

Even in the best-written song on the album, the bittersweet "Hangman," the emotion of the vocals never quite matches the feeling of the lyrics. *Unclosing* thus comes off as amiable background scoring that's instantly forgettable, which sucks because it's so obvious that, given his lyrical prowess, Tyler is capable of much more.

I hate to leave him with a handful of clichés, but the best thing Tyler can do is find his true voice and focus a little less on the packaging and a little more on what goes inside it. Otherwise, it's not just children who will be struggling to keep their eyes open when listening to an album like *Unclosing*.