

## Album Reviews

# Dogs' new album features good-natured rock

By **DOUG EDMUNDS**  
Staff Writer

**The Dogs D'Amour — In The Dynamite Jet Saloon**  
China Records

Imagine a British version of the Georgia Satellites, or a less offensive Guns N' Roses, or perhaps Hanoi Rocks with less glamour and more growl. Now add a dash of the Cult and a touch of Jacobites, and that should give you a pretty good sense of the Dogs D'Amour. This four-man group is the latest in a long line of rock bands that manages to make great music while relying on little more than familiar three-chord progressions, standard riffs and average musicianship. Their straightforward approach is part of what makes them so appealing, and listening to their U.S. debut LP, *In The Dynamite Jet Saloon*, serves as a welcome reminder that rock 'n' roll in its most basic form is still alive and kicking.

The opening track, "Debauchery," sets up the tone for the rest of the record with its heavy backbeat and loud refrain. When these blokes yell, "Gimme some debauchery," it doesn't sound like just a few more poseurs trying to be cool. Judging from the lyrics, one immediately gets the feeling that the band enjoys the seedy side of life, which includes trashy apartments full of unpaid bills and sex with "pussycats" in the back of downtown London

cabs. It's not hard to picture the guys on the front cover of the record as part of such a sordid scene, so the song doesn't come off as the trite bit of nonsense it might have been.

Main songwriter and singer Tyla uses his "bourbon wrecked throat," as the jacket states, to great effect on "How Come It Never Rains," a bitter lament about a love gone astray. Here and throughout the LP, bassist Steve James and drummer Bam lay down a solid groove for Tyla's rhythm guitar and Jo Dog's tasteful, bluesy licks. The last track on side one, "Medicine Man," stands out due to its great riff and propulsive beat, not to mention some of the more imaginative lyrics on the record (read this one ain't about booze or women).

Side two kicks off with the stomping good "Gonna Get It Right," another song about broken love in which the singer makes the observation, "God created woman, but the devil invented the blues." In a subtle follow-up to this line-making reference to the star of the '50s film classic "And God Created Woman," he says to the girl in the song, "You're the best thing since Bridgette Bardot." So we see that Tyla has a sense of humor and apparently finds time to catch the odd foreign film in playing rock 'n' roll and drinking.

"Everything I Want" is a real rave-up that sounds equally good on a nice home stereo or coming



Dogs D'Amour's album 'Dynamite Jet Saloon' features imaginative lyrics and good melodies

out of a crummy car radio. It also contains one of the funniest lines on the album: "I used to give you chocolates, you use 'em in your act/Looked so good, looked so fine/Gimme a cigarette." "Billy Two Rivers" breaks up the flow with its acoustic, two-part harmony approach, but the song works well as a bit of honky-tonk storytelling and contrasts nicely

with the rest of the material.

Overall, the 10 songs on this record stand up well, none of them sounding like last-minute filler. In fact, since it's rather short in length, there's no reason why the LP shouldn't include the extra tracks found on the CD. Despite the fairly uniform verse-chorus-verse-chorus song structures, there are enough solid hooks and

good melodies to distinguish the songs from one another and from a lot of banal rock music being played these days. The Dogs D'Amour aren't doing anything terribly original or impressive, but what they do they do damn well. So if you're in the mood for some good-humored, ass-kickin' rock 'n' roll, take a trip to the Dynamite Jet Saloon with the Dogs D'Amour.

## Fantasy meets reality on 'Chimera' album

By **RANDAL BULLOCK**  
Staff Writer

**Chimera — Our Size Is All In Our Heads**  
Atlantis Records

The point at which reality meets fantasy is a turbulent, noisy place. These two foes spar endlessly for their rightful share of each human brain. Unfortunately, the outcome is too often the same as what results from the collision of matter and antimatter: a double handful of nothing.

No one understands this better than Chimera, four Baylor University boys trying to establish a cease-fire between the war machine of the reality that surrounds them and the freedom-fighting fantasies that propel them through it. They seem to want to re-create the world and give the artists a chance to rule it, like any '70s heavy metal band, with the implicit understanding that power chords corrupt, and absolute power chords corrupt absolutely.

The opening track, "Genesis Resartus," kicks this musical Bible for the '90s off like Ian Curtis on his premiere American tour. As for the first-ever heavy metal song to sample rap classics and near-

classics ("My Adidas," "Rock the Bells," "Joe le Taxi"), "Genesis Resartus" shows that Chimera is acutely aware of the role art will play in the governance of this new post-post-modern universe.

Saying that Chimera is not all just Spandex and '70s guitar bravado is the ultimate understatement. It is obvious that lead guitarist Tom Waits spent many years practicing air guitar in front of a mirror before he ever tried to play the real thing. His fretwork, fast, furious yet exhibiting a remarkable degree of self-control, belies a superhuman sensitivity to the possibilities of vicarious, play-at-home guitar heroics.

Nowhere is this more evident than on "Pussy Willow," a jazz-rap stomp rave-up about nothing less than man's inhumanity to man. Samples of Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane lend an air of authenticity to the mayhem, while a quick snippet of "Free to Be You and Me" adds a sobering perspective of universality to this vehicle for Waits' instrumental genius.

The soaring popularity of both metal and rap guarantees that this album will turn many heads. Distilling these two genres down

and avoiding the posturing indigenous to both is just one of Chimera's talents. In their restructured autocracy, the representative centerpiece, encompassing virtually the entire history of music, is the mock symphony "Neanderthal Melodica," a paean to the evils of authoritarianism.

Using Beethoven's Fifth as a cantus firmus, and overdubbing dozens of recognizable rock, reggae, jazz and classical runs into the mix, Chimera creates a dizzying maelstrom of man's aural history. As a terrifying pastiche of all that has come before and as a brave, oracular statement of all that will come in the future, "Neanderthal Melodica" stands as a testament to the scope of Chimera's vision.

But regardless of their holistic view of the world of music, Chimera's teased hair, make-up and leopard-skin Spandex keep them in touch with their roots. Knowing that no '70s guitar rock album is complete without at least one acoustic ballad, Chimera shows their mastery over their own genre while at the same time giving it the quarter turn that keeps them artistically significant.

Instead of the traditional boy-loses-girl sentimentality found in most heavy metal ballads, Chimera

uses the mindless rivalry between college sports teams as metaphor for love gone wrong in the touching, plaintive "Beat Rice Ballad." A closer examination of the relationship between sports and love has never been made, and after one listens, you may never look at either one the same way again.

Although not everything works on this ambitious concept album, there is enough raw talent and good ideas to make up for the times that their fantasy gets out of hand and forgets there is a reality to fight. Chimera's overt irrealsm could be turned to combat the all-too-real social problems that plague everyone but, hey, when it comes to affecting reality, art is a hammer, not a mirror, right? We could all use the occasional dose of raw fantasy.

Creating a new music for mankind is a lofty goal and a tricky one as well. Chimera has managed to utilize the already vast expanse of Texas as a testing ground for their sun-baked idealism. A brand-new history has been waiting in the wings for a long time now. If you are interested in the visions of Utopia or just hate everything that has happened in music since the dawn of time, you owe it to yourself to buy this album.

"The family suggests that memorial contributions be made to the American Heart Association." When people want to honor a loved one and fight heart disease.

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