Thursday, November 11, 1999

After three successful independent releases, Vertical Horizon's major label debut seems to be everything the radio wants. Everything You Want is chock-full of catchy songs destined for G105 and teenage soap operas like "Party of Five." The album

CD REVIEW epitomizes the Vertical Horizon 90s, with its Everything You Want hard-core pop sound and cho ruses that you singing

along with on the first listen. Although this formula is becoming tiresome, Everything You Want is as good

as the formula gets.
With this album, Vertical Horizon took the opportunity to redefine the acoustic rock sound that sold 70,000

albums without any label assistance.

This move will certainly abandon some of the loyal grass-roots fans that the band has built since its 1991 inception. However, the change also creates



MARSHEY

fore accessible to the general public. Kane said the new sound was an

attempt to better express the band's changing life experience.

changing life experience.

"After six or seven years of touring, toughing out relationships, struggling; you begin to feel a little more realistic about life," Kane stated in a press release. "That realism, that anger sound-

The first single, "We Are," isn't the album's best track, but my guess is Vertical Horizon is easing into the radio. "We Are," though average on an album with many radio-worthy tunes, does establish the band's new, harder sound.

The released tracks should culminate with "Best I Ever Had," the album's token beautiful track. The song is almost a sure thing, with its slow, melodious underlying cello, sweet vocals and sad lyrics: "It's not so bad/I don't want you back/You're only the best I ever had.

At the end of the decade, the band's sound is probably too old to remain on the charts for too long. But unless some thing new catches on really soon, Vertical Horizon is destined for temporary fame, and the radio will benefit

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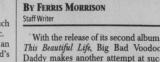
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This Beautiful Life, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy makes another attempt at success in the music industry but falls short of the popularity the band so desires. Most noted for its contribution to the

"Swingers" soundtrack and the theme TV CD REVIEW "Third Rock From the Big Bad Voodoo Daddy Sun," Big Bad This Beautiful Life Voodoo Daddy is one of the

swing

bands that has infiltrated the music scene since the genre became popular a few years ago. Listeners crowd auditoriums to hear the music played live, allowing fans to catch a piece of the madness that fills

their dancing shoes with jitterbugs. When you are listening to This Beautiful Life, visions of those crowds jumping and jiving to these guys don't come to mind. Rather, the sound creates an image of the band in some studio, stuck in a sound booth, trying unsuc-

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy takes no liberties with this album, leaving inventive solos out of some tracks that could have

Instead, repetitive lyrics and poor vocals plague the album. Songs like Things" and "Big and Bad" make the album cumbersome. It's as if ey've forgotten the crescendo, leaving

fans wanting something more powerful.
"Still In Love With You" offers some hope for success with a soothing saxophone solo that swoons over lovers past.

"When It Comes to Love," a sleepy, jazzy tune, creates the image of a smoky singles lounge with patrons that need a little advice on the subject.

One of the few songs both well-done and fun to listen to, "I Wanna Be Like You" jazzes thing up with its crazy salsa beat. Unfortunately, it's simply a new mix and cover of the same song from one of Disney's animated films.

But there is hope for Big Bad Voodoo
Daddy. Since swing is one of the easier

music types to compose, it shouldn't be too hard to take this album back to the drawing board and add some spice to these bland and unoriginal tracks.

And thanks to the undying popularity that swing music seems to have, it looks like the band has some time to reinvent itself before this fad is retired to

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Big Bad Voodoo Daddy makes an attempt to keep the swing trend alive and kicking with *This Beautiful Life*.

'Poppy, Philosophical' Lud Climbs Local Ladder

When I picked up *Epiflot*, local act Lud's second release, it had what one could call an informal press pack, really just more of a handwritten note to the Diversions editor.

After mentioning that Lud's first CD. Sparkling Rope, was rated one of the best

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CD REVIEW 1997, it quickly asked reviewer to be mindful of the sophical" "poppy songs"
Lud had to offer

philo-and

A challenge had been issued to this

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reviewer, so I bravely accepted and began listening to Epiflot.

First and foremost, due to the deep philosophical content I was preparing myself for, I felt I had to find out what their seemingly odd name meant.

After much deliberation, I've con-cluded that it has to do with a man named Ned Lud, who in 1779 broke into a factory and destroyed two knitting machines. Lud and his followers the Luddites were waging the war of man vs. machine. In my humble opinion, this is perhaps what Lud stands for.

Epiflot starts off with "Work in a

Restaurant," which could undoubtedly replace the current theme song to NBC's "Two Guys, a Girl and a Pizza Place." The catchy tune has a recognizable guitar riff and droning lyrics, creating an anthem for workers in restaurants everywhere.

This is the pop side of Lud. Playing on another catchy guitar riff, "Tree Lud"challenges the conventional rock sound by feeding lead vocals through a felanger, giving an underwater sound to the tune

Another pop installment.

Two songs really stand out as the deeply philosophical (really, what I just

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THE BEST MAN

like to call well-written) songs. "The Song of the Ambulance Driver' and has an almost bluesy feel to it. Another solid guitar riff aids the vocals of Kirk Ross and Sara Bell. Their chilling harmonies amplify the tune's message about the horror of death.

"Rocket to Kinshasa" speaks of the revolution to come in the Congo and the "confederacy of dunces and ass-

Deeply philosophical, but more importantly, meaningful.
While both the self-deemed "poppy tunes" and "deeply philosophical" ones grab my ear, the songs that really offer the most set the instance. the most are the instrumental tracks that

are in a whole new category themselves.
"Eritrea," "Valiant" and "Bud" show-case the band's real talent. The great guitar, driving drums and extremely complex bass lines keep the music complex bass lines keep the music

"Picante" is just that, hot and full of nergy. Can we say Carlos Santana of

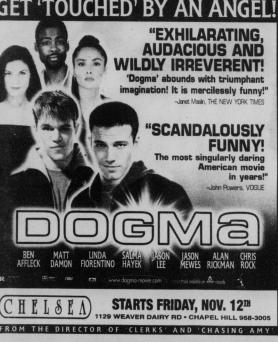
The one problem with "Epiflot" is that some songs on the album just get lost. "Patron Saint of Lost Causes" and "Epiflot" are weak songs that seem to

interrupt the flow of rocking tunes.

With another couple of releases, this
Lud should get those production errors out of the way and make a push toward being a great local band.

Despite this reviewer's initial doubt. Kirk Ross was right when he described Lud's new album as poppy yet philo-sophical. Lud's newest release is "sure to please," in both my own words and Kirk's.

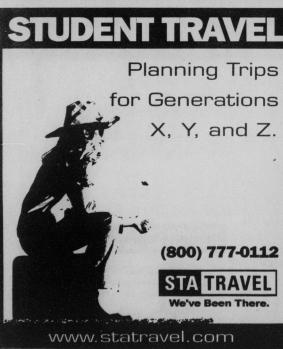
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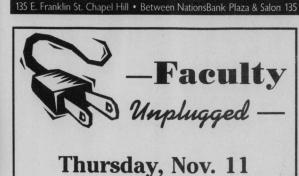


"FFFF (HIGHEST)

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will discuss her new book

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