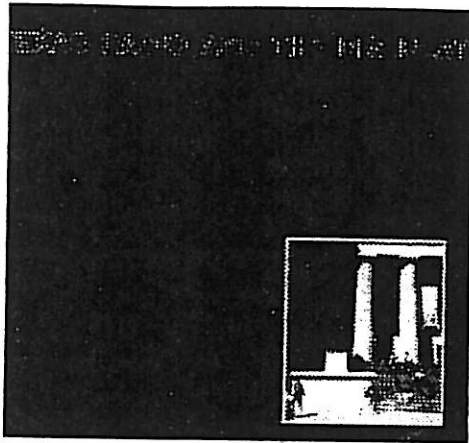


DISCS



Texas Radio & The Big Beat
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 PMP Records

Having first come to my attention through their appearance on the excellent *Cat in The Hat* compilation in 1995, I have spent two years wondering what this local act has been doing with their time-and more to the point, their exceptional talents. This independently produced debut proves they have spent more time twanging strings than twiddling thumbs, showcasing an impressively expensive range.

This is one of those albums that makes you want to get as close to the studio as you can, soaking in the music's warmth as though the speaker were an open fireplace. The combination between drum Dave Carruthers, with guitarist Phil McIntyre, who shares vocal duties with bassist Joe Williams, bring relatively simple arrangements to life with terrific energy.

Wasteaway, the opening track and the band's inclusion on *Cat in the hat*, refreshingly demonstrates one of the other sounds you can create with guitar, bass and drums. At least half of the current Australian music scene take note! *Wasteaway* is a blues/reg-

gae groover, leaving you unsure if you should be mixing bourbons or packing cones in preparation for the next forty five minutes. Both would prove useful (if that's your way), as Texas Radio go genre hopping from country rock, reggae, hillbilly blues, acoustic soul ballads and even an abstract soundscape recalling the Vietnam War.

Highlights are many, but the immediate striking interlude *Indian Ocean*, with McIntyre's spoken word vocals cutting sharply into the dreamy back rhythms, as he tells of his Aussie Easy Rider fantasies; the riding-high *Hope & Glory*; and the tabacco chewin' tale of harmonica wielding outlaw, *No Mystery*. Personal faves stand at the end of the list, *Ride on Through-a New Orleans* special guaranteed to get you rummaging through the bottom drawer looking for mum's bobby sox, it's Chuck Berry guitar lines taking an eerie power over your feet.

One gains the distinct impression the Texas Radio would be very impressive live. In some bluesier tracks, you find yourself asking them to throw away the script and get nasty with you, jammin' crazy! The inclusion of *Paris Island*, recorded live, proves us correct; a fine rendition of the inspiring tale. Seek this album out. It has lots of fun, a lot of feeling, and I could only be more impressed if there was actually someone who didn't like something about this record.

Greg Cormack



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