

Entertainment

Aerosmith pumps out a comeback in response to multitudes of new bands

by Robb Frederick
Entertainment Editor

Throughout the recent resurgence of heavy metal music, a legion of cloned bands have swamped the airwaves, with little response from the influential groups who helped inspire this new generation of rock musicianship. Recent tours by rock dinosaurs the Who and the Rolling Stones, however, have sparked a rebirth in the bands of old, resulting in a hard-hitting celebration of the raunchy, blues-oriented sound of Aerosmith.

Pump, the latest step in Aerosmith's calculated return to form, proves that the bands of today still have a lot to learn. These veteran rockers fuse their talented musical abilities and bad-boy undertones to produce an updated block of music governed by the classic sound that catapulted them to stardom during the 1970's.

The 1987 release of *Permanent Vacation* returned Aerosmith to the star status which they had vacated for so long. Following a band break-up which began in 1979, the group had entered a period of inactivity, which was broken only by the unworthy *Rock in a Hard Place* and *Done With Mirrors*. Personal differences and drug abuse continued to haunt band members, and the possibility of future recording success remained dim.

Through detox programs and internal concessions, however, the members of Aerosmith reunited forces to record powerful singles such as "Dude (Looks Like a Lady)" and "Rag Doll." Heavy rotation on AOR radio and MTV brought the band a new generation of fans, and Aerosmith again departed on the road to success.

While *Permanent Vacation* returned Aerosmith to the public eye, the album's sound remained subdued and almost commercialized. The rebirth of the band's raw style is what propels "Pump" beyond any of the groups other recent works.

From the beginning guitar thrash of "Young Lust," the band forewarns listeners of the music to come. This song instantly picks up momentum, and the remainder of *Pump*

rarely backs down. The ever-present driving guitar of Joe Perry, complemented by fellow guitarist Brad Whitford, energizes the refined performances of bassist Tom Hamilton and drummer Joey Kramer. Vocalist Steven Tyler appears in prime form as his effective vocal range leads listeners through the ten versatile tracks present on *Pump*.

Songs like "Don't Get Mad, Get Even" and "My Girl" stand as typical rock songs graced with the superior touch of Aerosmith crunch. The band continues to hammer away at their desired sound through the blistering "Voodoo Medicine Man" and the frantic "F.I.N.E."

"Love in an Elevator," the first single released from *Pump*, combines searing fretwork by Perry and abrasive, overtly offensive lyrics from Tyler. The elaborate layering of sampled vocal passages steadily increases before Tyler's a capella ending. This song should keep Aerosmith on the airwaves and continue the band's commercial comeback.

Pump may stand as Aerosmith's most impressive work of late, but the release is not without problems of its own. The musicianship of the band members proves to be much higher than the current standard, but the group can not seem to rise above the stereotypical imagery of sex, girl problems, and outright defiance of authority.

This shallowness can be forgiven, however, considering the market Aerosmith is aiming for. The band members do attempt to bring lyrical meaning to their work, as seen on "Jamie's Got a Gun," which briefly tackles the issue of child abuse.

Another problem present on *Pump* involves the occasional lack of original creativity. Many of the rock industry's newer groups have blatantly expressed the influence of groups like Aerosmith on their work, so any lack of originality by a group of this caliber comes as a disappointment.

On "Dulcimer Stomp," exotic percussion closely mirrors the style of "Continental Drift" by the

Rolling Stones. The guitar work for "Monkey on my Back" replicates AC/DC's "Given the Dog a Bone" with an almost flawless perfection.

These trifle slips may be frustrating to diehard Aerosmith fans, but the remainder of *Pump* contains enough unique material to justify forgiveness.

The band receives a boost by recruiting producer Bruce Fairbairn for *Pump*. Fairbairn's lavish production slickens the feel of this release without softening the blows of this hard-edged band.

Fairbairn molds the inspired performances on *Pump* into a slick, respectable release. The glut of new bands may have achieved temporary success on the music industry's ever-rotating turntable, but the members of Aerosmith have once again proven that they are here to stay.

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Entertainment Briefs

Godfather sequel prepared

Director Francis Ford Coppola is set to begin filming of *Godfather III*. Shooting begins November 15 in Italy, and several original cast members including Al Pacino, Diane Keaton and Talia Shire will return to their roles.

Premiere lists top films

Premiere magazine will soon release its list of the Ten Best Movies of the 1980's in November's issue. Leading the pack are Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980), Steven Spielberg's *E.T.* (1982), and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986).

Graham to get star

Evangelist Billy Graham will receive the 1900th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Graham, who has preached his gospel to over 100 million people, is the first clergyman to be honored with a star.

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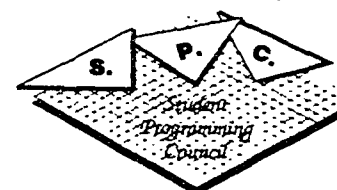
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