

Costello croons on new disc

Imperial Bedroom
Elvis Costello
Columbia

By Pat Higgins

Call me Ishmael, call me a cynical misanthrope, (just don't call me late for dinner), but the idea that Imperial Bedroom is a masterpiece is the biggest media hype sold to the public since John Anderson.


In the last five years, Elvis Costello has released more quality work than anyone in the business — more than the Clash, Springsteen or whoever. Since Elvis the C. has never been known to make a false move, it would be unfair to say that Imperial Bedroom isn't a good record, because Costello at his worst is light-years ahead of most of the competition. However, Imperial Bedroom is his least impressive effort since his first album, My Aim Is True. (Almost Blue doesn't



count since it was a one-shot oddity.) My Aim Is True had some undoubtedly great tunes but was hindered by a lackluster sound quality. Imperial Bedroom has a state-of-the-art sound. Its missing ingredients are

the passion and intensity Costello used to personify. He used to spit out lyrics like bursts from an M-16. Nowadays, he's a crooner — a good one — but still it's a letdown.

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