

MUSIC REVIEW

"Smash"
Offspring
Epitaph
Grade: A

Offspring is making a helluva splash with "Smash."

The Southern California punk band combines a variety of music from Jamaican ska to soulful melodies and a heavy dose of thrash to make a truly kick-ass album.

The first release, "Come Out and Play," rocketed the album into the top of the charts. And the band's latest release, "Self Esteem," promises to keep Offspring there.

From beginning to end, the album is a cacophony of spectacular songs. It starts off with "Nitro (Youth Energy)" and keeps the energetic pace until the concluding song "Not the One."

"Bad Habit," Offspring's tribute to freeway shootings, is an intense ride. The lyrics are not really sung, but shoved into the listener's ear.

Probably the best track on the album is "Genocide." The lyrics are nothing to write home about, but the music and the guitar licks are more addictive than nicotine. "Come Out and Play" is the cut-

ting edge of punk. The beat and music are fantastic, and that crazy, little background refrain ("You gotta keep 'em separated") somehow makes the song.

The self-centered, depressing song "Self Esteem" is almost a complete opposite of "Come Out and Play." But if anything, it is even more popular. The mournful, almost whining, lyrics coupled with some great instrumentation make this song a real ego trip.

The rest of the album is just as strong, but one song really stands out. The ska sounds of "What Happened to You?" are reminiscent of



the unique music of The Mighty Mighty Bosstones.

The didactic lyrics almost seem out of place in the fast-paced,

brass-laden tune: "Before you started tokin' you used to have a brain / But now you don't get even the simplest of things / I can draw a little picture / Or even use my hands / I try to explain, but you just don't understand."

Offspring has shown that music doesn't have to be Top-40 crap to make it. A lot of people will say Offspring is just another alternative band that's gone mainstream, but it's actually a band that has moved the mainstream a little closer to alternative.

— Joel Strauch



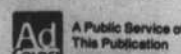
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