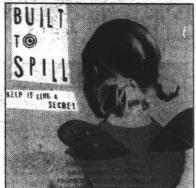
PAGE 14 🖉 DAILY NEBRASKAN 🔳 THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1999



Built To Spill "Keep It Like A Secret" Warner Brothers Records Grade: C

The main idea behind folk music is to continue a tradition.

And with weekly hordes of boring new releases, rock 'n' roll sounds more unoriginal and folk-like everyday.

This is mostly because rock's musician-building-on-tradition thing has

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for the last half of the 1990s.

In this connection, Built To Spill's new album, "Keep It like A Secret," sounds too much like a history of recent indie rock and makes another pathetic contribution to "modern folk."

In this latest execution of nothing fresh, the Boise, Idaho, group's new album sounds like a cross between the feathery coloring of the Flaming Lips and the machine symphonic rock inherent of almost every Washington, D.C., band of 10 years past.

A bad combination that will prove to be of awesome-yet-ordinary pleasure for listeners who have been chained to an indie-rock comfort zone; they are a crowd that trades in the pursuit of greatness for a variation of high school, a new club or clique, an unknowing-to-itself pose on individuality that truly represents fear of the idea.

"Keep It Like A Secret" is like

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a knockout punch in him.

fails the song's potential.

as a nun's checkbook.

to have written this song.

pared to the original and raw sensitivies

At times, it seems like BTS founder

For instance, the album's seventh

of Merle Haggard or the Birthday Party.

and vocalist Doug Marstch doesn't have

track, "Else," is musically well-done

with its Lungfish-like subdued and lush

form. Marstch's light voice, however,

record is as calculated, smart and tight

a solid effort, everything is in place - the

Flaming Lips probably would've liked

wouldn't have performed or recorded

the song with such a factory air of jury

duty. The problem with Built to Spill

here and throughout the record is the

Furthermore, Built To Spill's new

The third track, "Carry the Zero," is

But the wonderful Lips certainly

the brainchild of Martsch, sadly doesn't try to epitomize its name with any form of loose, rock 'n' roll savvy.

Consequently, "Keep it Like a Secret" is catchy, razor-sharp, pristine and boring all at the same time.

On this release, Built To Spill is to the great Lips what Bob Seger is to the Animals; a boring, latter day exaggeration of a rock 'n' roll pioneer.

At least BTS had the sense of humor to write its new album's eighth song, in which Martsch quotes famous lyrics from Rolling Stones and Pink Floyd.

"You were right when you said 'we're all just bricks in the wall' ... you were right when you said 'you can't always get what you want," he sings.

But shamefully, going to see indierock boy bands such as BTS now often seems like a gutless parade of a dying art form; like watching frat boys play their new set of grunge songs or walking

wearing lesbian singing at a coffee shop. However, the saddest thing of all is

17

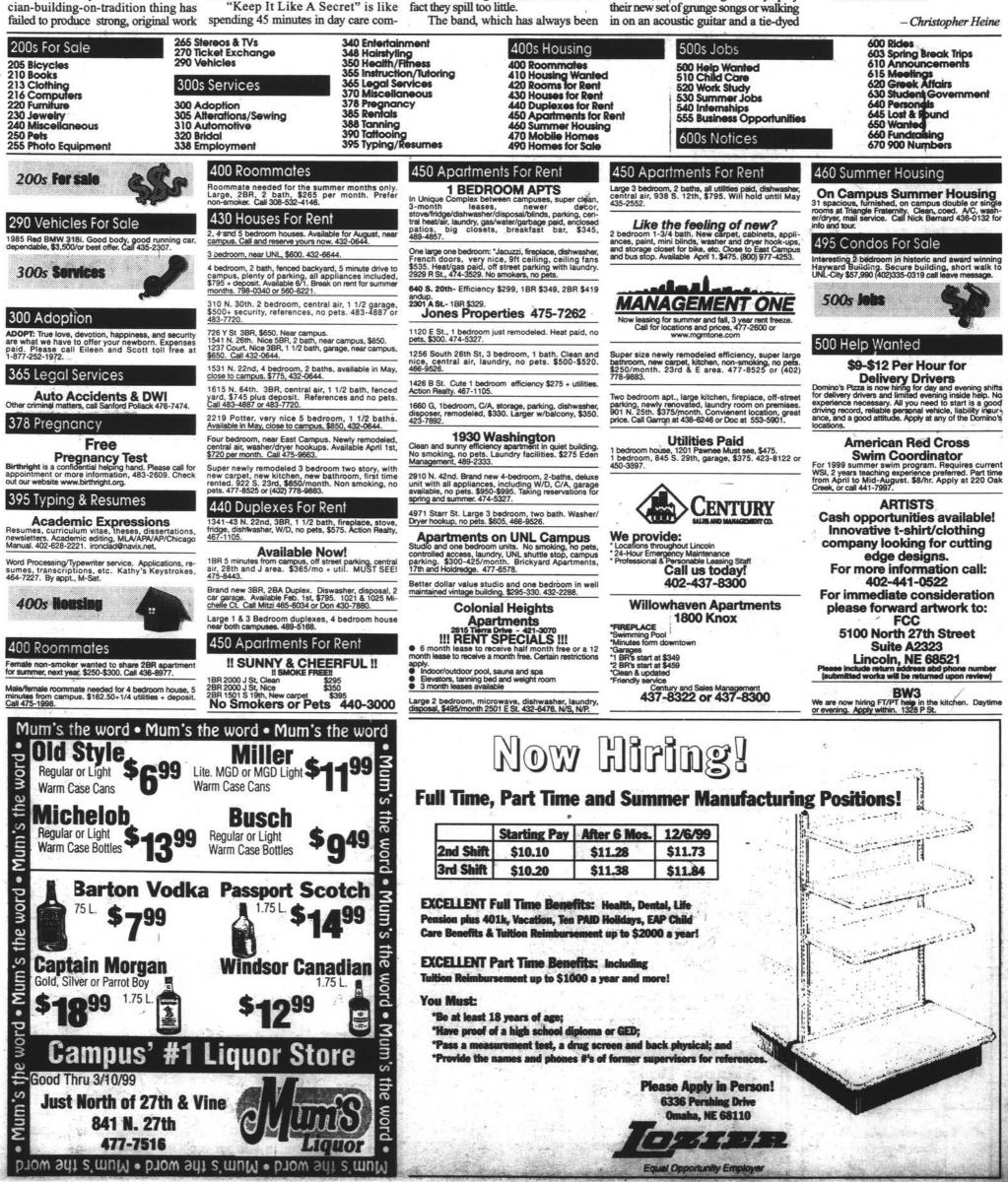
the fact is that Martsch has a fairly indistinguishable, high-pitched singing style, and his lyrics are anything but bad.

The potential is obviously there because Built To Spill's 1994 effort, "There's Nothing Wrong with Love,' was much more free and inspiring. Simply put, it wasn't boring.

Unfortunately, "Keep It Like A Secret" has an unoriginal sound accented by an aura of cutesyness and perfection that makes it hard for its effort to cut to the heart of anything. "Carry the Zero," with its mathe-

matical name and sound, even makes the effort to expose the album's tightbutt, perfect blandness with its words.

"Count your blemishes, they're all gone," he sings. That's too damn bad.



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