

Echo & The Bunnymen
"What Are You Going To Do
With Your Life?"
 London Records
Grade: A-

When your biggest complaint about an album is that it's too short, you know you have a winner on your hands.

Generally when a band gets back together after breaking up, it's a bad thing. Sure, everyone thinks "Hey, they'll do great things again!" But they almost never do.

Almost.
 Echo & The Bunnymen stand in nearly a complete contrast of that. When singer/guitarist Ian McCulloch left the band in 1988, it was over. The



band released another record, but it didn't have any spark, and the group closed up shop in 1990.

Fast forward to 1997, when McCulloch, guitarist Will Sergeant and bassist Les Pattinson got back

together again and reformed the band. Hopes for the reunion album, "Evergreen," weren't high, but the album surprised most critics. It wasn't spectacular, but it was good.

Pattinson has since mostly backed out of the band, leaving Sergeant and McCulloch as really the only members in the band.

Still, "What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?" stands as a fantastic record for a band considered long gone.

Make no mistakes, the record is too short - it clocks in at less than forty minutes. But what a beautiful forty minutes they are.

This isn't the old Bunnymen, certainly, for the wall of psychedelic guitars has been traded in for soft

acoustics and sparse electric guitar flavoring.

From the simple acoustic riff of the opening track (also the title track), the sound is much more vivid and relaxed.

It's an album to unwind to. It's an album to dream to. Simply, it's a great album.

McCulloch is in prime form again for lyrics, with sharp turns of words like "I can feel the stars shooting/Through my heart like rain/Leaving all the scars where the/Pleasure turns to pain/Point me in the light of a bright/And shining right direction/And then take me home again" - the chorus of "Rust."

Sergeant and McCulloch seem to have finally found a solid balance

between style and substance and made an album that takes the best of both worlds.

This isn't necessarily an album all old Bunnymen will like, however. It is quiet, majestic and thoughtful, without any of the tracks taking on a whoosh of energy as many of the band's older tracks did.

Regardless, however, "What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?" proves that a band *can* come back after breaking up, that the words "The End" don't have to be forever and that musicians don't have to be afraid to change.

Echo & The Bunnymen are dead - long live Echo & The Bunnymen.

— Cliff Hicks

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Edited by Fran & Lou Sabin

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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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