

Rock comes back full throttle on 'Closer'

By Neal Obermeyer
Staff writer

Some rock goes for the crotch. Kiss, Guns 'N' Roses, Twisted Sister — they make you strut bow-legged and howl "I'm a MAN!" Even if you aren't.

Other rock, however, goes for your guts. It makes you squirm from the very foundations of your digestive system. You can sit still and fight it, but your insides battle to break free, as if you were riding a metal pony or had swallowed Tabasco mercury.

Six By Seven made an album like that two years ago called "The Things We Make." The album was full of these droney, monster-sized, psychedelic rock freakouts, and it was pretty good. Now Six By Seven has made another one called "The Closer You Get." It's better.

These silly limeys attack us at the beginning with "Eat Junk Become

Junk" and "Sawn Off Metallica T-Shirt," five minutes of atypical, jagged Gang of Four/Wire quirk-rock.

But it's a TRICK! With the beginning of "Ten Places to Die," the echoey drums start ... the chorused, distant guitars ... the falsetto vocals ... and that noise in the background ... getting louder ... what is it?

I'll tell you what it is. It's your own bowels, and they are going to EXPLODE.

This is what Six By Seven does. It ROCKS. This isn't Dee Snider breaking down your bedroom door. This is Phil Spector dissolving your house with a 14.5 million-watt amp in your backyard. And you know it ROCKS when you realize you've been getting ROCKED by the same chord for the last six minutes.

But they try to trick us some more. In songs such as "One Easy Ship Away" and "England and a Broken Radio," they go soft and mellow — and they do it with Radiohead-esque beauty. But be warned. It's only so they can catch you off-guard and smack you in back of the head with the two-by-four of ROCK! Hooooooo!!

They're full of these jokes. It's

Six by Seven

TITLE: The Closer You Get
LABEL: Beggars Banquet
GRADE: B+
FIVE WORDS: For optimum results, eat yogurt.

because they're British. Joking is what they do. Remember Jesus Jones?

For example, in "My Life Is An Accident" and "Another Love Song," they try to trick us into thinking they've gone Madchester with some funky up-tempo groove thang.

But hold up, they say. Are we the Stone Roses? No. Are we the Happy Mondays? No. Are we Six By Seven?

Yes. And then VROOOOOM as the one-chord vacuum cleaner of death knocks you backwards and drowns those sissy dance beats out of your mind and flushes them out of your system with another all-out assault on your guts.

And in "Don't Wanna Stop" and "Slab Square," these funny goobers go two-minute punk rock on us. Singer Chris Olley shouts silly Britpunkisms such as "Take a break from your head!" and "I want to rent



you!" Or something like that.

We, his humble servants in rock, have no choice but to respond with a resounding "Huh?" to which Lord Olley cries, "I wanna shave this guy!" or something like that, *eleven times!!* This ROCKS!!

Nevertheless, people will try to judge this album in terms of Dean Wareham, Thom Yorke and Kevin Shields. Don't let them. This is ROCK, and this must be judged in terms of Paul Stanley, Slash and Dee Snider.

But these guys and rock music in general are getting old. Six By Seven make an admirable attempt to breathe some life into the genre and make a

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valiant effort with the tribal-drumming-sleighbell-vacuum-cleaner finale "Overnight Success." But it just doesn't cut it.

Like Dee Snider, they can't keep it up, and this album just fails to climax. Nevertheless, this is 44 minutes of all-out bowel assault.

"The Closer You Get" won't quite commence waste-disposal, but like the best burrito money can buy, it'll keep you guessing for a few hours.

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QUAKER STATE

Prophet's style change doesn't convince

■ 'The Hurting Business' brings a new musical direction for artist.

By Ken Morton
Staff writer

If Chuck Prophet had released his latest album, "The Hurting Business," about seven years ago, he may have lived up to his last name by now.

Prophet, a roots-rocker who has been around for 20 years or so, has added turntables and looped drum beats to his sound to produce something that sounds a lot like Beck and little like the Prophet of old.

Like many singer-songwriters, Prophet's voice still sounds rough around the edges. But the smooth

instrumental arrangements that back him up are generic and don't fit with his voice. The drum loops seem canned, and the scratches, provided by DJ Rise and Mark "Ill Media" Reitman, are unnecessary.

The opening track, "Rise," sets the album's pace, with a moody mix of drum machine, harmonica and slide guitar. Even the first line, "A change, a change is gonna come," signifies Prophet's shift in musical direction.

The change, however, seems insincere, almost like he's borrowing a cool shirt from a friend to try out a new look. The shirt just doesn't fit, and besides that, it just doesn't look right.

Most of the disc lacks any edge, and Prophet's usually impressive guitar work hardly shows up at all.

Chuck Prophet

TITLE: The Hurting Business
LABEL: Hightone Records
GRADE: C
FIVE WORDS: Prophet sounds like someone else.

One track, "God's Arms," is the closest thing to showcasing Prophet's twangy style. "God's Arms" is probably the best overall track, with its religious overtones and backing vocals that tell Prophet it's OK to sin.

The other highlight of "The Hurting Business" is the country-esque "La Paloma."

The vocals sound as though they're coming from a transistor radio, and Prophet weaves a tale of a



cross-country trip to escape a crime he committed in California.

Prophet's new album is only really new for him. Don't go out and buy this CD unless you're a big Prophet fan. But, if someone happens to be playing it somewhere, you're not likely to ask him to turn it off.

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