

Marah's first album melds rock with rootsy, folk-inspired vibe

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scene. Just like a nation turning its lonely eyes to Joe DiMaggio, Bielanko asks, "Where'd you go Mr. Rocky Balboa?/Angelo Bruno what has happened to you?"

On "It's Only the Money, Tyrone," Marah slows itself down enough to tell what sounds like a murder ballad. It turns out to be about a dirty river and all the little secrets it holds: "Well nothin' was found 'till the brown river flooded/And driftin' down down came a lifetime of things/ Stolen cars; cracked up handguns and bodies/ Given back, back to the world up above."

Bielanko returns to the river in "The Catfisherman" and one of the most demented fishing trips ever: "I got a spot 'neath the bridge by the expressway/ Where the freaks shoot dope and/ peddle their asses baby..."

Bielanko obviously has tongue firmly placed in cheek - the conditions are hardly ideal. Later in the

song, he sings, "I got a buddy who swears he once caught a human head." Sounds like fun, huh?

After the first couple of listens of "Kids in Philly," I really couldn't understand what all the buzz was about. Bielanko's vocals sounded buried under the clutter of too many sounds and instruments.

After taking time to really listen to the disc, the sounds started to come together like pieces of a puzzle, each fitting neatly into place.

Drummer Ronnie Vance's offbeat style, which at first bordered on annoying, is reminiscent of Cream's Ginger Baker. Sometimes, even his drum set sounds more like a percussion instrument than a rhythm-keeper.

Marah's influences could be attributed to the tales-of-the-city style of Bruce Springsteen, the raucousness of the Clash or the horns and Wall of Sound-like production of '60s soul.

Bielanko's harmonica work on "Faraway You" and "The History of



Where Someone Has Been Killed" dodges the Dylan-clone trap many fall into and sounds much more like a bluesman than a folkie. The latter tune strikes with a fury rivaling the grittiest of Rolling Stones songs.

Marah's loose sound may be hard for some to handle, but if you're getting tired of the macho posturing of the rock-rap craze or if you're fed up with boring, acoustic soft rock, then Marah may be just what you're looking for.

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◆ 1246 Court, 4BR, \$800
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