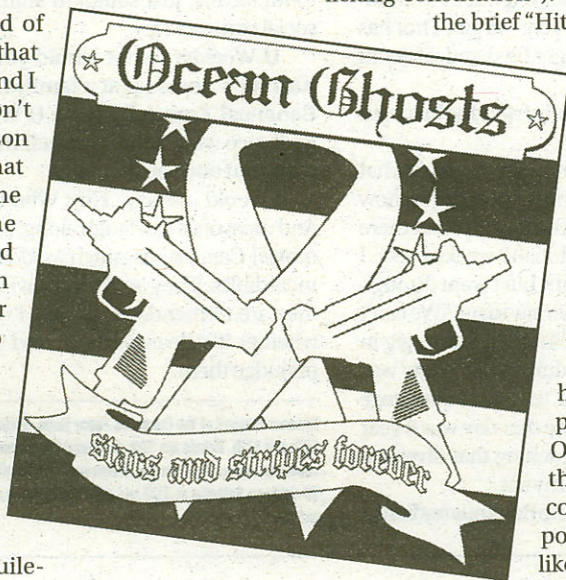


Local ghosts create haunting rock-hop

BY DANIEL KIRSCHENBAUM

I don't like The Wizard of Oz. Sorry. I'm well aware that I'm alone in that opinion, and I have my reasons which I won't delve into here. But the reason I mention my dislike for that classic movie is because the Ocean Ghosts sample the chorus of "The Merry Old Land of Oz," for their own "Out of the Night," and for some reason, I can't stop listening to it.

Like the best moments on the Ocean Ghosts Stars and Stripes Forever, "Out of the Night" is goofy, slap-sticky fun propelled by a bouncy bass line and straightforward, almost guileless lyrics. The Ocean Ghosts, made up of rapper J. Rhodes and deejay Scotty Boombox, have put together a hip-hop album that can be whatever you want it to be. There's political commentary, (although it rarely



gets more sophisticated than references to the "cunt-licking constitution"). There's juvenile humor (as on the brief "Hitchcock"), and of course, there's loads of drugs and alcohol references.

J. Rhodes has a voice that's closest reference point is MC Paul Barman, and like MC Paul Barman, the effect of that voice can often turn grating, but Scotty Boombox's vibrant, loose production helps smooth over the weaker vocal sections of the album.

Those looking for edgy hip-hop are definitely in the wrong place. At their most political, the Ocean Ghosts sound more quirky than acerbic. But that's not a complaint. Most artists who wax political usually end up sounding like they're trying to impress someone, whereas the Ocean Ghosts, seem to want to have a good time.

well, they just Credit them for being able to transfer some of that feeling to the listener.

Rise Against: Hardcore punk and raw energy

BY BEN PEYTON

Rise Against, have just released their most recent punk rock album, The Sufferer & The Witness. Full of hardcore/punk rock hooks and raw energy, The Sufferer is sure to please all Rise Against fans and without a doubt attract a new crowd as well. In the name of journalistic integrity, I have to be honest by saying that this type of hardcore/punk rock has never been my cup of tea for a variety of reasons. With that said, there really is not anything that I can say really turns me off from this album, other than the fact that leader singer Tim McIlrath sometimes comes dangerously close to sounding like the lead singer from Nickelback. Which in my book is a cardinal sin of music.

The tracks on The Sufferer run the gambit from tales of revolutionary kids storming the streets attempting to destroy the establishment to, dare I say cliché, emo/

punk songs about love lost and found. Rise Against is not unlike a lot of other hardcore punk bands that share the same love for punk songs laden with catchy hooks and powerful choruses played as fast as their hands can move. I will also give Rise Against some credit for spreading a musical message laced with socially conscious ideas about the need for change which I think all music, not just punk rock, is missing these days. On the other hand though nothing says revolution like releasing your album on a major label and selling it at Wal-Mart, but I guess everyone have bills to pay.

Besides that though, nothing on this album really caused me to sit up and take another listen. If you are a fan of either Rise Against or Warped hardcore punk, then this album is probably for you. If you do not consider yourself one of those people then I would advise waiting "Ready To Fall", which I assure you will be 15 minuets by the end of the summer, up your own mind.



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