



OYSTERHEAD

The Grand Pecking Order Elektra

Forming a supergroup is easy. Forming a superband, however, is an accomplishment. The difference? Ask Cream, not Damn Yankees. Only time will tell whether or not bassist Les Claypool (Primus), guitarist Trey Anastasio (Phish) and drummer Stewart Copeland (the Police) will defy supergroup odds and leave a lasting mark. Based on *The Grand Pecking Order*, gambling types would be wise to stack their chips on "Yes." These boys click, and you need not dig all three P's to appreciate the results. Copeland contributes a pop sensibility and distinct hi-hat-heavy

rhythms (most notably on the Doors-y "Rubberneck Lions," and the *Reggatta* groove of "Oz Is Ever Floating"). Anastasio offers loop fetishes and "stratospheric solos," leading two acoustic tunes reminiscent of his recent solo stuff ("Radon Balloon," "Birthday Boys"), and clocking in more vocal time than he did at Oysterhead's live inception. Overall though, Claypool's chunky basslines and quirky vocal deliveries are first among equals. Yet, some of the best moments come when the three distinct personalities overlap ("Little Faces"), morph into something new (the trippy trance of "Wield The Spade") or simply get hard ("Pseudo Suicide" recalls Black Sabbath). Inevitably, Phish-heads will cry "More Trey," Primus fans won't expect Claypool's singing, and Police fans may be confused. But those who overcome their preconceptions will hear a super band. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN

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