



**Widespread Panic
Til the Medicine Takes
(Capricorn)**

Guitarist Mike Houser said last year that, after 15 years of hard-core touring, "nine out of ten people still haven't heard of Widespread Panic." This isn't really surprising for a group that—like other jam bands—concentrates on the live show and doesn't aim to hit mainstream media with the typical marketing blitz of studio recordings. So it sorta feels like an insult to say that the band's seventh and latest release, *Til the*

Medicine Takes, is an accessible album, or that there are songs here that really belong on the radio.

It's enough to make you wish you could live in a Widespread world. Switch on the country station and you'd catch "The Waker," with Houser's make-ya-wanna-sing-along vocals and producer John Keane coming out from behind the buttons to put some banjo plucking into the mix. On the gospel station, you'd get Dottie Peoples wailing along at the end of "All Time Low." For the light 'n' easy listeners, there'd be "You'll Be Fine," featuring drummer Todd Nance's vocal debut. Flash forward several years and you'd flip on the classic-rock station, where it would be playing "Climb to Safety" sandwiched between perhaps "China Grove" and "Midnight Rider." Here's the clincher: Tune in to the cutting-edge station and "Dyin' Man" would be topping the evening countdown, because those crazy kids dialing in wouldn't be able to get enough of this rocker's wicked harmonies or the turntable-scratching wackiness of Colin Butler (of Big Ass Truck).

Since Widespread Panic has all the bases covered, *Medicine* seems like it should end up disjointed and jumpy, but it's not. Underneath the experimentation and eclecticism, the songs all come from the same place. WP is the same band it has always been—the one that, someday soon, nine out of ten people will love.

Robin A. Rothman
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