



PALOALTO
heroes and villains

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Alt anglophiles

R.I.Y.L.

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PALOALTO

Heroes And Villains *American*

Fred Durst calls Paloalto a "real band with a real sound and real songs." Funny, considering that vocalist-guitarist James Grundler actually blames Bizkit for what's wrong with American rock as he and his bandmates look across the pond for inspiration instead. Maintaining the lush m.o. etched out three years ago on the group's self-titled debut, *Heroes And Villains* is thick with string sweeps, soft melodies, strong beats and multiple vocal tracks. Layers build and fall over an acoustic strum and/or a tinkling key base, forming high-impact mini-sym-

phonies like soundtracks to endless rolling landscapes, sunsets melting into mountains, waves quietly floating away instead of crashing. Drawn out by Rick Rubin's clean production, these songs swell with a sense of patience that allows each note to live out its own independent lifespan. Still, defiant lyrics and aggressive guitars do mark a few tracks, including the first single "Fade Out/In." Occasionally the band even adopts a hardened and hardly hopeful tone that seems a bit more L.A., but that's not really Paloalto. Mostly they exude a cautious optimism that many of their angsty influences and hometown counterparts lack. Ultimately, Grundler's like Thom Yorke after a solid pep talk, and Paloalto is like the many British Radiohead followers with a "Made in the U.S.A." tag. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN