

Radiohead unconventionally release new album to eager fans

By Kirk Avery

In my attempt to find out what I could about Radiohead's new album, *In Rainbows*, I was overwhelmed by the copious amount of reactions, praise, analyses, etc that I came across. Basically anything that anyone could even remotely associate with the album was said. What kind of worries me is that whatever Radiohead seem to do, there are very few people who criticize it. They are one of the best bands in the world, and I can see why. I agree with that consensus, but will there ever be a time when they release something we don't like?

In *Rainbows* catches Radiohead on an up-swing from the "experimental" period they had during the production of *Kid A* and *Insomniac*, though much of what they do could be considered experimental.

This up-swing could be defined as a return to a more accessible modern rock sound, which they made famous in the mid-90's. With this album, they retain some of their more electronic elements which complement their rock sound. Although, I did find their last album, *Hail to the Thief*, did to a greater extent. I don't want to get into discussing individual tracks,

but at this point, I've probably listened to the album all the way through several times, and its appeal is finally revealing itself. When it was released, digitally, which I'll discuss further shortly, people were raving about it. These



people could have very well believed what they were saying, but I couldn't help but think maybe they were just reacting on an instinct that whatever Radiohead does is genius.

One factor that weighed heavily on my perception of the album was I had already heard half, if not two-thirds of the songs, on this album long before it's release. This is not to boast, but I believe it took away the element of surprise, or that reaction you have when hear-

ing a song for the first time.

Though perhaps the songs weren't even that strong to begin with, whose to say? What I can say is this isn't another *OK Computer*, which is widely considered their most popular, if not their

best album. It's good, but it isn't one of their top three albums.

The album was made available for download on Oct. 10, but it was only ten days prior that the band had even announced there would be an album.

Sure, most people who followed the band and frequented such sites as pitchforkmedia.com knew that they were working on an album, but the actual release date was unknown, and this news came as quite a surprise. Most albums are

promoted for months before they are actually released, but Radiohead decided that just ten days would be enough. "Did this hurt sales?" you might ask. Well, no.

It was reported that there were 1.2 million downloads on the first day. THE FIRST DAY! Sure the album was available for download on a "pay what you want" basis, and I was likely one of many who paid nothing, but that's still pretty impressive.

In addition to the album being available for download, you can pre-order a "discbox" which consists of the album on vinyl, the album on CD, and an extra CD with bonus tracks. Also included is a bunch of regular and digital artwork enclosed in a large, book-like case.

If you ordered this it wouldn't be available for another month or so. The discbox actually costs money which sets it apart from its digital counterpart, but many fans are still willing to pay the money to have the collectible.

This was the first indication of an actual physical release, but it has since been revealed that Radiohead have signed with a label in the U.K. that will release the album next year.

Information on a North American Release is still pending.

Corgan returns with another 'Smashing' album

was on the Smashing Pumpkins latest album, *Zeitgeist*. It quoted "Billy Corgan releases his inner Tony Iommi... A must listen [to] album" and received high ratings from the reviewer. Being a fan of previous Smashing Pumpkins albums and Black Sabbath I found myself \$20 poorer and reviewing the album personally.

For this 12 song album the Smashing Pumpkins consist of only two musicians.

Jimmy Chamberlin and Billy Corgan. Billy is like a young child given an entire playground to himself in this album, playing a variety of instruments, vocals, and producing every song. Although, he needs help from someone to push him on the tire swing. Jimmy is nearby and would love nothing more than to give a few thrusts of guidance courtesy of his drumset and recording experience. Together they combine to make a great rocking playground experience.

The album starts with track *Doomsday Clock*, a catchy rock song well deserving of introducing of what's to come. The next track *7 Shadows of Black* then touches on

overcoming drug addiction using a sound reminiscent of classic Smashing Pumpkins. Having a similar subject *Bleeding the Orchid* proceeds giving a softer sound in the format of a typical pop song. A love song titled *That's The Way (My Love Is)* follows, giving an even softer sound than previous tracks.

This is when the best two singles take over the album. First, *Tarantula* builds to a very catchy verse which molds to some lead guitar. This format repeats with varying creative guitar leads throughout the song. The track *Starz* then brings the same feel providing a more pleasurable chorus supported with great heavy metal drumming techniques. The anti-war lyrics of *United States* follow, being the longest song on the album (9 min 52 sec) it becomes Billy's experimentation of different recording styles and instrumentation. The mystical sounds are comparable to that of a Tool song. The album shifts to the softer side again, with the next track *Neverlost*. This is probably the weakest song on the album in contrast with the top two singles.

Bring the Light and (Come On) Let's Go turn down the suck knob from the previous song bringing heavy upbeat choruses back into the picture. For *God and Country* then continues to bring more light to the subject of war. The album concludes with a very soft song called *Pomp and Circumstances*. It literally sums up all subjects touched upon by Billy in an emotional outburst. This song reminds me of when the credits come on at the end of the movie and everyone gets up leaving not paying much attention to it, creating personal opinions on their viewing experience. It leaves me with a positive review.

The Smashing Pumpkins evolve their sound into *Jimmy Eats World* meets *Black Sabbath* with hints of their vintage days for *Zeitgeist*. My personal favorite songs on the album are *Doomsday Clock*, *Tarantula*, and *Starz*. The songs are well laid out and engineered. It may take several listens but buying this album is well worth the money and should satisfy. It rates a 8.8 out of 10 on the Skeletor scale. That talking tiger was right all along, they are great.

Skeletor's Picks - Brodie Birt

Artist: Smashing Pumpkins

Album: *Zeitgeist*

Production Company: 2007

Martha's Music (owned by Warner)

Web: <http://www.smashingpumpkins.com/>,

<http://www.myspace.com/smashingpumpkins>

Awaiting my routine oral assault (of the dental variety) at the orthodontist's, I found myself overwhelmed with boredom. I scattered through the mess of magazines in search of some entertainment.

Beneath two Reader's Digests and an outdated *Sports Illustrated* I found a *Rolling Stone* magazine labeled with a man resembling *Cadre* Editor-in-Chief Liam with his shirt off. Scarred from previous images I then began quickly skimming through the other pages.

Among the more appealing pages I found several album reviews that sparked my interest and many others that didn't. One particular review that caught my attention