

## Rock

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BADFINGER: “No Dice” review

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Well, now another album that begs for a friendly cross-referencing contest. What Mott The Hoople has done for the perpetuation of hard Dylan, Procol Harum, jagged Stones and prehistoric Kinks mythology, Badfinger has performed on the still radiant corpses of The Beatles (*Help* era) with ample embellishments of those same old Kinks and a touch of Buffalo Springfield.

I’m pragmatic about derivative music; if you’re borrowing from a mythic source – *and* you can pull it off with warmth, humor and dexterity – why not? The main thing – really – is that it sounds good; if it does, any purely cognitive judgments are rendered irrelevant. Badfinger sounds really good.

Beyond that, the group’s on Apple, so they automatically receive a semi-official imprimatur from at least some of the used-to-be Beatles. If it sounds good to George, Paul, Ringo, and the other guy, that should be good enough for any of us. Badfinger has such a light, able touch that its music easily transcends its initially mock-up appearance.

The Beatle flavoring found throughout the album harks back to early ’65, when the Beatles had perfected their intuitively created, unembellished form and had yet to slip into their “important” *Rubber Soul* formal dress. Remember “Ticket To Ride,” “The Night Before,” “You’re Gonna Lose That Girl,” “Help”? Some of the best rock ever created. No Dice impressively captures the rich but straightforward flavor of that period.

Badfinger’s done its apprenticeship, first as the Ivies, whose specialty was fey, falsetto ballads, than as the perpetrators of a good

part of the *Magic Christian* soundtrack. Some of their early material hinted at what was to come, but the group was always burdened with severe limitations. Now, they're on their own, and I doubt that anything will stop them from even further development.

It's a magic idea: bring back the Beatles to *Help*, but knowing what they know now, then sit back and see what happens. If any of this makes you even slightly curious, get *No Dice* – no kidding.