

Creem

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BADFINGER: "Straight Up"

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Badfinger, bad fing er {la. *malfingus* infected hang nail} 1. Inflammation of metacarpal extremities brought about by prolonged exposure to lighted blowtorch 2. Any finger severed more than three inches below the wrist. 3. A British rock group of little renown.

Back in gradeschool, all the real smart-ass types would begin their speeches and oral report assignments by quoting dictionaries. You know, like, "My talk today is about octopuses. Webster has defined an octopi as a genus of two gilled cuttle-fishes etcetc." Lately I've noticed this going on in rock and roll reviews. (Example: "Ozone-Ozone is defined as . . .") Never being one to ignore bandwagons, I thought I'd start this review that way. The fact that it is totally irrelevant to the matter at hand should in no way detract you from the continued reading of this short masterpiece.

Anyway, Badfinger are that group of four young British boys who owe what limited success they have thus far managed to finagle to their uncanny ability to sound like vintage middle period Beatles. Although they are now making semi-conscious attempts to rid themselves of this degrading identification, one still has the feeling that the boys are laughingly aware of just how it was that their small reputation was spread. The fact that they have titled songs on their last two albums "Love Me Do" and "Tell Me Why" is what allows me to render this (sure to be) highly controversial statement.

On *Straight Up* one can't point a finger at any one song and say "Ha, ha, *Beatle* ripoff" like one could with the priceless "No Matter What" from the *No Dice* album. The big single smash on this album, "Day After Day," can't really be called anything but a Badfinger, with the slight exception of a very *All Things Must Pass* guitar solo

that I'm sure all you Big Hitbound fans are well familiar with.

As far as I'm concerned, this is all too bad. The only reason I was so intrigued with the group in the first place was because I enjoyed the exuberance of their Beatle rip-offs. On *Straight Up*, Badfinger have chosen to consolidate and show off their sound, a curiously bland and unremarkable blend of guitars, drums, and nubile voices that really doesn't go anywhere or in much of a blaze of hurry.

George Harrison, star of stage, screen and television, has produced four of the twelve cuts here, with the rest being done by Todd Rundgren. The Harrison songs are without exception the stronger, being somehow full and more musical sounding. The Rundgren numbers seem more common and forgettable.

As far as this observer is concerned, Badfinger would be better off doing twelve of the Beatles' greatest hits and doing them without all this pretension of originality. So there.