

Rolling Stone

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BADFINGER: "Magic Christian Music"

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While wild-eyed teenage revolutionaries, stuffy progressives, and worshippers at the altar of HEAVY! will surely disparage them as this year's Bee Gees, it is unlikely that those who still consider *Beatles* '65 the apogee of post-rejuvenation rock and roll will find Badfinger a real lemon-squeezer.

By way of elucidation, Badfinger is definitely a throwback to those innocent days of the mid-Sixties before rock and roll replaced the corny show-biz conventions – I mean, it's not at all difficult to imagine these chaps converging suddenly on a microphone to shake their hair, grin boyishly in unison and yell, "Oooh!" in falsetto harmony. They're terribly refreshing that way, which, combined with Tom Evans' ability to sound exactly like each of the three singing Beatles, combined with P. McCartney's occasional patronage, will quite likely result in their making a whole career of it.

Of the twelve selections here, perhaps eight are subtle pastiches of techniques learned from old Beatles and Beatle-imitators records. "Rock Of All Ages," for instance, is an adaption of "I Saw Her Standing There," Similarly, "Carry On Till Tomorrow" sounds more like "I'll Be Back" with each additional listen (although the boys here, in what appears to be an acknowledgment of rock and roll history from 1965 to present, throw in a politely raunchy lead guitar into the middle).

The archetypal Badfinger song and performance is "Maybe Tomorrow," which they released sometime in 1969 as the Ivies (a name the Beatles thought a little too refreshingly dated). This one contains all the deliberate melodic ornateness, cuddly cuteness,

Paulie-cum-Bee Gees orchestration and embarrassingly mushy words that in various combinations characterize all but one of the remaining cuts, which are notable mostly for how startlingly Beatlishly they are performed.

The one anomalous cut, 'Knocking Down Our House [Home],' is just a knock-out. Jolting you first with an uncharacteristically *overtly* schlocky intro, it sah-*wings* along on a wonderfully awful bossa-nova rhythm and is embellished with idiotic coronets and woodwinds. You just know that, however hard they try to ridicule this approach by overdoing it, they've got a special place in their hearts for such tuneful pulp.

Even when they're so unbearably cute that you want to take them off for a minute to clear the air with Led Zeppelin or something; you can't help but be cheered by their presence, Remember the name; Badfinger, from Liverpool. They're gear.