



## **The Libertines** *The Libertines*

(Rough Trade Records)

It's hard to believe that The Libertines have been releasing records for only three years. In that short span of time, there have been innumerable breakups, punch-ups, overdoses, jail sentences, rehab trips, and more than enough malarkey to keep the British music press working overtime. Although the Anglo quartet's debut, *Up the Bracket*, contained a fistful of memorable tunes like "What a Waster" and "I Get Along," their self-titled sophomore set is a truly classic album. Produced by Mick Jones, these 14 songs run roughshod over the territory once roamed by The Clash, not to mention The Jam and The Kinks. Rather than merely rehashing trends, The Libs imbue their shambolic anthems with a zeitgeist-seizing, live-fast-before-dying attitude that separates them from their ennui-laden, so-cool-they're-boring contemporaries. Singers/guitarists Pete Doherty and Carl Barat play up their factious relationship, turning the band's internal turmoil into cyanide-sweet lyrics that are as catchy as they are revealing. Songs like "Can't Stand Me Now," "What Became of the Likely Lads," and "Last Post on the Bugle" are incisively autobiographical, but not at the expense of excluding the audience. Instead, the listener feels like a part of their checkered story. Even though their story will, in all likelihood, end tragically, *The Libertines* will endure as the bright flash before the explosion.

—Nevin Martell