

NERF HERDER

Nerf Herder (Arista)

Rating: ****1/2**

By J. Kordosh

My idea of the perfect contemporary band? OK! A bunch of easy-to-listen-to, slightly punkish, *Star Wars*-obsessed dweebs who write songs rife with hip cultural references and (this is the most important part) use only their first names in their own liner notes!

I refer, of course, to Live.

Just kidding, LAUNCH subscribers, soon-to-be-subscribers and the unwise. Actually, that's a pretty good cursory view of Nerf Herder, a.k.a. Steve, Parry and Charlie, a.k.a. the Weezer of Santa Barbara, who are--and here's some irony for you--the subject of this review. Well, not them, but their record. You get the idea.

Parry 'n' friends have enjoyed a vogue on MTV with "Van Halen," a clever litany of VH titles from their early years coupled with a timely attack on Sammy Hagar, never an easy target. When Nerf Herder say that Sammy lost his "cool," you've gotta wonder what cool they figured Sam ever had to lose. And why it all adds up to one helluva great song concept. And why--when they say they'll never buy Sammy's records again--we'd think for a second they ever bought 'em in the first place.

This kind of thing is going on all over Herder's first major label record. It all sounds good/funny/hip, but it's just a little too coy for my liking. I could mention that Steve is not credited with being "the bass player" but as the guy who "collects Pez" and just rest my case, but let's go on a bit. On "Golfshirt"--which sounds so much like Weezer that the guys in Herder might as well stop talking to each other--they sing (re: punk's seminal days) "I was listening to Rush and trying to feather my hair when all that stuff went down." No, you were watching *Sesame Street*, Parry; that was *me* doing the hair-feathering. On "I Only Eat Candy" they reject Christ, Satan, vegetarianism and carnivorousism all in the same song! (Actually, this one is kinda funny.) "Sorry," on the other hand, is an imaginative list of stuff to be sorry about to a girl (why are girls always kicking bands like this in the teeth?), like "having sex with your sister."

Obvious and faked calculation or good-natured yucks? Well, when Darth Vader said "Obi-Wan can no longer help him," I'm not sure if he was talking about Luke Skywalker or Parry here. Or Sam Hagar, for that matter.