

Smashing Pumpkins – Rotten Apples – Greatest Hits (2001)

Written by bluesever

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1. "Siva" – 4:21 2. "Rhinoceros" – 5:53 3. "Drown" – 4:30 4. "Cherub Rock" – 4:59 5. "Today" – 3:22 6. "Disarm" – 3:18 7. "Landslide" – 3:06 8. "Bullet With Butterfly Wings" – 4:18 9. "1979" – 4:23 10. "Zero" – 2:41 11. "Tonight, Tonight" – 4:15 12. "Eye" – 4:54 13. "Ava Adore" – 4:21 14. "Perfect" – 3:22 15. "The Everlasting Gaze" – 4:02 16. "Stand Inside Your Love" – 4:13 17. "Real Love" – 4:10 18. "Untitled" – 3:51 Personnel: Jimmy Chamberlin – drums Billy Corgan – vocals, guitar, programming, mixing, production, art direction James Iha – guitar D'arcy Wretzky – bass guitar + Matt Walker – drums on "Ava Adore" Joey Waronker – drums on "Perfect"

Like many alt-rock bands, the Smashing Pumpkins sound better than expected as a singles band -- probably because their high points were singles, no matter how carefully created their albums were. The Smashing Pumpkins fit this bill particularly well for two reasons. For one, they rose up through the ranks in indie rock circles, where limited-edition singles on Sub Pop meant as much as a full-lengths on Caroline. Then, after they made it through the indie jungle, they had to fight their way onto MTV airwaves with songs and videos that sold their intricate albums. This was a good, even prosperous, situation when the Pumpkins (OK, when their leader, Billy Corgan) could balance their knack for great singles with their desire to make sweeping neo-concept albums like *Siamese Dream* and *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*. They did for a few years, conquering the alt-rock pack after Nirvana imploded, but the group itself eventually turned in on itself -- either because of Corgan's own hubris or the group's complacency. They had more than enough great material for a good compilation, and *Greatest Hits* almost fits the bill. Its main problem is that, like most even-handed compilations, it gives too much credence to the music made after the group's peak, at the expense of some of the group's better material. Essentially, anything that most listeners will want to hear wraps up 11 tracks into the 18-track album, when the collection dives into material from *Adore* and *MACHINA* -- two albums that aren't embarrassments, but really only of interest to the hardcore, particularly in how they desperately attempt to embrace the fleeting electronica fad of the '90s (something almost all alt-rock bands did, almost always to no avail). So, this collection bogs down more than it should, and because its final eight tracks are taken from the Pumpkins past their peak; consequently, it's hard to recommend this to anyone who just wants an album with all the hits.

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Yes, it does have many of the cuts that they'll want on one disc, including the non-LP "Drown" and "Landslide," but the desire to justify two albums nobody bought -- especially at the expense of "I Am One," "Rocket," "Geek USA," and "Here Is No Why," among others -- hurts a collection that should have showcased the Pumpkins at their peak. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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