Airbourne - Runnin Wild (2007)

*01. Stand Up For Rock 'N' Roll 02. Runnin' Wild 03. Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast 04. Diamond In The Rough 05. Fat City 06. Blackjack 07. What's Eatin' You 08. Girls In Black 09. Cheap Wine & Cheaper Women 10. Heartbreaker 11. Let's Ride (*2007 release) 11. Hellfire (*2008 release*)* Joel O'Keeffe - vocals and lead guitar David Roads - guitar and backing vocals Justin Street - bass and backing vocals Ryan O'Keeffe – drums

With their debut album, Runnin' Wild, Melbourne, Australia's Airbourne add their name to a long list of Aussie and non-Aussie bands earnestly beholden to hard rock godfathers AC/DC. Although good timing may be on their side because, inevitable charges of cloning notwithstanding, there's arguably never been a greater need for fresh blood like Airbourne to come along and revive this hallowed form of basic, pub-born, boogie rock & roll. After all, 2007 marks the seventh anniversary (or, more appropriately, the seven year itch) since AC/DC delivered a studio album of their own, and that was the career lowlight Stiff Upper Lip, containing one great single and a lot of filler. So when compounded with Airbourne's natural, no-fuss songwriting instincts, even the most cynical of fans will likely be happy to put their suspicions aside, and simply enjoy the Runnin' Wild ride for what it's worth. And what it's worth, dear friends, is classic hard rock gold (if not platinum) epitomized by blue collar, straightforward, pint-lifting anthems like the title track, "Heartbreaker," and the rousing introduction of "Stand Up for Rock & Roll." Interestingly, along with instrumentally spare, mid-paced offerings such as "Diamond in the Rough," "Fat City," "What's Eating You," and even first single "Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast," Airbourne's overall aesthetic draws as much from Brian Johnson-era AC/DC as the more commonly emulated Bon Scott -- and perhaps this too is what helps to distinguish them from their more hopelessly indebted predecessors (hello, Rhino Bucket!). In any case, the biting attack brought to bear by lead shrieker and guitarist Joel O'Keeffe and his crew rarely falls short of electrifying results, but there's obviously an incrementally spine-tingling energy to be found in the album's faster-paced, hard-driving offerings such as "Blackjack," "Girls in Black," "Let's Ride" and the aforementioned title track. Finally, those still refusing to overlook the band's AC/DC-isms and focus on the songs are challenged to keep a smile off their faces during "Cheap Wine & Cheaper Women," which, like the rest of Runnin' Wild reminds us that it's really sort of stupid (and pointless) to resist the uplifting power of rock & roll, and therefore Airbourne

themselves. 'Nuff said -- sometimes surprise is overrated -- let's rock! --- Eduardo Rivadavia, Rovi

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