Pretenders - Pretenders (1980)

Side one *1. "Precious" – 3:36 2. "The Phone Call" – 2:29 3. "Up the Neck" – 4:27 4. "Tattooed Love Boys" – 2:59 5. "Space Invader" (Pete Farndon, James Honeyman-Scott) – 3:26 6. "The Wait" (Hynde, Farndon) – 3:35 7. "Stop Your Sobbing" (Ray Davies) – 2:38*
Side two
8. "Kid" – 3:06 9. "Private Life" – 6:25 10. "Brass in Pocket" (Honeyman-Scott, Hynde) – 3:04 11. "Lovers of Today" – 5:51 12. "Mystery Achievement" – 5:23
Musicians: Martin Chambers – drums, backing vocals Pete Farndon – bass guitar, backing vocals James Honeyman-Scott – lead guitar, keyboards, backing vocals Chrissie Hynde – rhythm guitar, lead vocals + Fred Berk – bass guitar Geoff Bryant – horn Henry Lowther – trumpet Gerry Mackelduff – drums Chris Mercer – saxophone Nigel Pegrum – drums Chris Thomas – keyboards, sound effects, production Jim Wilson – trumpet

Few rock & roll records rock as hard or with as much originality as the Pretenders' eponymous debut album. A sleek, stylish fusion of Stonesy rock & roll, new wave pop, and pure punk aggression, Pretenders is teeming with sharp hooks and a viciously cool attitude. Although Chrissie Hynde establishes herself as a forceful and distinctively feminine songwriter, the record isn't a singer/songwriter's tour de force -- it's a rock & roll album, powered by a unique and aggressive band. Guitarist James Honeyman-Scott never plays conventional riffs or leads, and his phased, treated guitar gives new dimension to the pounding rhythms of "Precious," "Tattooed Love Boys," "Up the Neck," and "The Wait," as well as the more measured pop of "Kid," "Brass in Pocket," and "Mystery Achievement." He provides the perfect backing for Hynde and her tough, sexy swagger. Hynde doesn't fit into any conventional female rock stereotype, and neither do her songs, alternately displaying a steely exterior or a disarming emotional vulnerability. It's a deep, rewarding record, whose primary virtue is its sheer energy. Pretenders moves faster and harder than most rock records, delivering an endless series of melodies, hooks, and infectious rhythms in its 12 songs. Few albums, let alone debuts, are ever this astonishingly addictive. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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