

THE EAGLES
Eagles Live (Asylum/WEA)

THE comparative swiftness with which this live double album has been knocked together and tossed out to the general public pinpoints what can only be a group in the stages of ongoing commercial desperation. The figures have yet to be printed in black-and-white, but in 1980 the likes of The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and Linda Ronstadt have suddenly found their once-luxurious mega-platinum sales-potential fractured to such a degree that serious thought is called for. The Eagles have responded with the oldest ploy currently available to a group of their wretchedly reactionary status.

This behemoth known as 'the live two-record set' has long been viewed as a most spurious option by the discerning rock pundit. 'Eagles Live' simply takes all the shortcomings previously noted and spreads them over four sides of vinyl.

The Eagles have always been pretty much a studio band, clumsily attempting to work up a separate identity for stage-work primarily by utilizing the presence of Joe Walsh to provide humour and a few rough edges. With 'Eagles Live', however, the band drop any pretensions of toughening up and using old songs as vehicles for 'the radical reinterpretation' — probably because the songs themselves are so indelibly tied to all the flakey flotsam that embellishes their measley clout that, like a wax works museum in the Mojave Desert, the efforts would simply evaporate if taken out of their cosy vacuum.

Versions of the 'Hotel California' and 'The Long Run' material are virtually all note-for-note rehashes that inject absolutely nothing to the spirit and execution of their studio archetypes. Listening to 'Live's runthrough of 'New Kid

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In Town' one can only scratch the old noggin bemusedly at the fact that the effort sounds like a brusque remix of the track gracing 'Hotel California'.

There's even a fade-out so obviously 'studio'-created that the audience isn't allowed one appreciative yelp.

There's only one new song — a Steve Young composition called 'Seven Bridges Road' — and that's so light-weight you almost expect the vinyl it's cast in to rise and bubble like a soufflé. One could add that Joe Walsh at least tries — on 'Life's Been Good' and the mildly rumbustious 'All Night Long' — to *communicate* but he ultimately just ends up getting lost in the cold vacuous precinct of MOR product.

The live double album has had its moments, notably of late with Neil Young's 'Live Rust' and Joni Mitchell's 'Shadows And Light'. Both artists used the format to drastically refashion previous compositions, to readdress and re-evaluate the conceits inherent in certain old statements and generally ensure that those songs sustained their vitality. Young and Mitchell however are 'artists', always refusing to get boxed inside a musical / conceptual cul-de-sac. The Eagles are all glib, calculating gestures of no real value. 'Eagles Live' 's only achievement is that it hits a new low in worthlessness.

Nick Kent