

Delectable

Calm, cool, collected: the solo Don Henley.



DON HENLEY

Actual Miles: Henley's Greatest Hits

GEFFEN GED 24834

Under all that hair and harmony, The Eagles were capable of some pointed observations about the carings-on in Hotel California and from the evidence of their individual careers since the first break up in 1982, it seems clear that it was their drummer Henley, of all people, who was wielding the acid pen. Henley has handled himself carefully since with only three solo efforts, *I Can't Stand Still*, *Building The Perfect Beast* and *The End Of The Innocence*, in more than 12 years and this compilation brings together what could fairly be described as the best of them, adding two new songs and an uncredited bonus track, the version of Leonard Cohen's *Everybody Knows* which recently appeared on the *Tower Of Song* tribute.

While Henley's version of that tune is the weakest track on this record, its delectable air of foreboding fits well alongside Henley's own compositions (all collaborations with musicians like Sheryl Crow, ex-Motel Martha Davis, Danny Kortchmar, W. Axl Rose, ex-Eagles Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmidt Heartbreakers Mike Campbell, Ben Tench and Stan Lynch and Bruce Hornsby) which provide the soundtrack to the Hollywood dream while simultaneously flaying that dream alive. In this respect *The Boys Of Summer* with its exquisitely judged tension and release and Henley's voice in top gear is as near to a perfect record as most people ever get. *Sunset Grill*, with its layered keyboards and lyrical bass, isn't far behind.

The title track to 1987's *The End Of The Innocence*, with its distinctive Hornsby piano arrangement and plaintive countryish vocal, was seized on by radio as a belated elegy for the passing of the '60s, while *The Last Worthless Evening* and *The Heart Of The Matter*, both from the same album, showcase his extraordinary gift for melancholy de luxe. Next to these rockers like *I Will Not Go Quietly* and even the brilliant swipe

at TV news, *Dirty Laundry*, pale a little.

Of the new tracks, the big one is *The Garden Of Allah*, a big production, semi-spoken depiction of Hades 90210 which he describes as the follow-up to *Hotel California*. The only disappointment of this fine collection is that the compilers didn't swap *Everybody Knows* for *A Month Of Sundays*, a haunting portrait of poverty on the farm which appeared 10 years ago on a B-side. ★ ★ ★ ★

David Hepworth

Earl Roberts/Redskins



Don Henley: "An Eagles ticket? That'll be over \$100, sir."