



FEATURE: BENTLEY'S BANDSTAND

By Bill Bentley, Columnist**The Kentucky Headhunters, *Dixie Lullabies*.**

Sometimes it's plain hard being Southern. Even when hard-core fans hang tough and don't forget where they came from, a lot of other fair-weather fans can be swayed by the fickle finger of cool and move on when it turns the other way. That doesn't stop these revved-up renegades from continuing to do things their own way, whether it's chomping down hard on the boogie, blasting out a big-time backbeat or just raising hell in general. Their new album allows no less.



Singers Richard Young and Doug Phelps sound like they've just come back from running with the dogs after raccoons, their voices pure mountain passion. There is no way this sound can ever be learned; rather it's a gift of down home DNA. With gems like "Tumblin' Roses" and "Roll On Little Pretty," the Headhunters show other classic rockers how to age gracefully by simply being who they are and not what anyone thinks they should be. If there were real justice in the music world they'd be playing stadiums and spiking beer sales around the country.

Sometimes it's easy to miss the forest for the trees, but hopefully the Kentucky Headhunters won't get lost in the woods. They have too much to offer for those who are still wondering if the South is gonna do it again after all. For a band that did as much for muttonchops as Neil Young and coonskin caps as Davy Crockett, it's time to listen while they tear up Thunder Road with glass-pack guitars roaring. Closing song "Recollection Blues" is a last-chance weeper best heard when the sun is starting to rise and the grass is still wet from the night before. Only the strong survive, they say, and Kentucky's finest sound more than ready to be in that number.

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