

Boston: City Rocks new compilation

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Having been a part time Bostonian from the Bronx for the past two and a half years, I've gained a fair understanding of what is considered tragedy by the loyal citizens of the Beantown. The death of [insert name here] Kennedy and the demolition of the Boston Garden tend to rank at the top of the list for many of the drunken, thickly accented white men of the city. However, after purchasing the wretched guard dog of Hades that is *City Rocks Volume 1: Boston* at the local Best Buy for only \$9.99, Bostonians will most likely consider adding music to their list—right between the two Boston Massacres of March 1770 and October 1986.

City Rocks, lovingly brought to us by Bands.com and Sony Music Special Products, promises to "... highlight the phenomenal rock 'n' roll that has come out of Boston ..." and bring "further proof that rock 'n' roll is here to stay." I beg to differ, and, after taking a look at the album cover, which appears to have been drawn by color guard leader and over-achiever of P.S. 76, little Tyler McDougal, I would think Bands.com

and Sony were playing a vicious joke on the indigenous people of Boston. With so many starving artists and graphic designers out there, Mr. Revere is somersaulting in his grave, wondering, "Why?"

After recovering from extraneous laughing or a synaptic relapse in your brain upon viewing the aforementioned album cover, you may want to check out the CD's play list. Band One, Track One: The Standells, "Dirty Water." Amazing how a band from LA made it onto an album showcasing the history of Boston's local music. However, Bostonians are vain and cannot get enough of that God-forsaken song. The rest of the compilation progresses through the decades, beginning in the mid-'60s and ending somewhere in the '90s, and, just like the times, the music evolves with each track. Early in the CD we have the overplayed and almost expected "Spirit in the Sky" by former Boston University student Norman Greenbaum, and book-ending the 15 tracks is another highly overplayed ditty, "Where'd You Go?" by The Mighty Mighty BossTones. Thrown into the mix are some true staples in Boston's music history—The Cars, Boston, J. Geils Band, and Morphine—to list a few.

Where the compilation fails is in its presentation, and lack of truly showcasing the local rock 'n' roll Boston should be known for. The CD is far from an easy listen, jumping from the rock of the '60s to the soft rock of the '70s and leaping into to the cheesy pop of the '80s and eventually crashing to an eagerly awaited halt on a ska-core note. Calling it an uneven mix of tunes would be an understatement; I would rather call it something harsher: something that

would surely make a puppy yelp or a baby cry. Absent from this so-called rock 'n' roll compilation are local inspirations for alternative rock such as the Pixies, Bim Skala Bim, Dropkick Murphys or the Lemonheads (instead we get Juliana Hatfield). More recent artists such as the Allstonians or maybe even The Sheila Devine are also nowhere on this album. I guess we should be thankful Maurice Starr's New Edition (and their white counterparts New Kids on the Block), Marky Mark, Bobby Brown and even recording "artist" Leonard Nimoy did not make the cut.

The disc spans four decades of Boston's music scene, and there is not one damned track from Aerosmith. Anyone on this planet who has ever had a bowel movement would expect a CD

entitled *City Rocks Volume 1: Boston* to have at least a snippet of a song from the band's drugged up glory days. I'm not even a fan of the band but even the sound of Steven Tyler gargling banana strawberry yogurt while tumbling down a flight of stairs would seem appropriate. The lack of Aerosmith would not surprise me as much if it weren't that the King of the music industry hierarchy was the one to have released this album. Sony is also butchering the music of New York and Canada with two more *City Rocks* releases. Mayb my rage is uncalled for, after all, "Let the Music Do the Talking" by The Jo Perry Project is track 12. My deepest and most sincere regards to Sony for once again providing "further proof that rock 'n' roll is here to stay."



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A true crime: Aerosmith is not on the *City Rocks: Boston* CD!