

WASP talent surprises

THE HEADLESS CHILDREN.
WASP (Capitol Records)

I have a surprise today. When I first glanced at the new album by heavy metal madmen WASP, I hesitated. "How bad can it be," I wondered.

I've never really been partial to WASP's brand of over-obscene rock. Despite the title, "The Headless Children" offers a side of the band not heard before.

WASP has always been more famous for its stage show than musical talent. When the band appeared in 1981, it brought raunch to a new generation of rock fans. The band's wild image surpassed that of Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne, Slade and Kiss. Those not too familiar with the band must be thinking, "These guys must be sick." Yes, they were.

It's been a while since the band's last tour and album "The

Brian Rickman, a MacArthur High School junior, plays in the band Paradox.

Brian Rickman

Review



Electric Circus" flopped in sales. WASP was the only band I thought really deserved to be on the "Filthy 15" list.

Since then, leader Blackie Lawless has given the band a complete overhaul. Gone are the days when WASP would perform gruesome acts live on stage. Even the band's name has changed. WASP used to stand for "We Are Sexual Perverts." Lawless edited the periods from the band's name, which now means what it says — the bug.

WASP is socially aware and more political on this album. Whether the band is sincere or just trying to cash in on current

phases remains to be seen.

This album employs some great session musicians. Ex-Blackfoot and Uriah Heep keyboardist Ken Hensley does a fabulous job and adds to the hard rock feeling.

Also appearing is Lawless' longtime friend Frankie Bannali, former Quiet Riot drummer. Bannali provides some of the best rhythms any WASP album has had. Hensley and Bannali add a new dimension, along with Lawless' improved songwriting.

The album's only downfall comes when the band takes a stab at The Who's "The Real Me." Sorry, guys. Leave it to Pete and Roger.

This is one of the best heavy metal albums I've listened to in a long time. WASP is moving in a new direction. To those who thought the band was without any talent, you were right. Notice I said "were." B

(Albums courtesy Camelot Music, Hickory Point Mall, Forsyth.)

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