



STEREOPHONICS

Performance And Cocktails (Sony)

Stereophonics are a great example of how a covers band can keep the format and style of certain classics whilst injecting something eminently more-ish into them. The trio from Wales (allegedly Welsh music is the 'in' movement what with Manic Street Preachers and Catatonia also doing big things) have a 'back street band' feel to their new music. On *Performance and Cocktails*, Kelly Jones' airbrushed vocals express everything from the trivial (*T-shirt Suntan* is about a record company receptionist lacking in stature) to the melodramatic (*I Stopped To Fill My Car Up*). The lyrical contours of each song are grounded with a self-honesty. *Is Yesterday Tomorrow Today?* transitions from sombre lyrics ('it's another way of getting through the day; picking up ripped cigarette boxes; hoping that one remains') to harder-edged prose ('everything that's you'll come back again'). Though the Stereophonics' guitars often display overused power chords, some riffs are sure to please up-and-coming stringplayers and air-guitarists alike — they're easy to play and they sound good. An album of tunes that easily leads to a cloudy afternoon-heightened sensation.

Ruby Boukabou