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EXTREME

Boston's latest export may turn out to be bigger than baked beans or the cod. Make way for the premier band of the 90's: Extreme is back, and it was well worth the wait!

The band has called the stuff they strut "hard funk'n' raunch, rhythm and roll" — an apt description, but just a partial one, given the incredibly far-ranging material presented on their 1989 self-titled debut LP and their brand new follow-up release, *Extreme II Pornograffiti*. Extreme's grooves sizzle with what one journalist dubbed "molten slabs of rock 'n' roll" and more than enough raw energy, talent, and well crafted musicianship to propel them to the forefront of their field of contemporaries.

The quartet was forged out of two separate local Boston bands in late 1985 when lead vocalist/frontman Gary Cherone and drummer Paul Geary joined forces with guitar virtuoso Nuno Bettencourt and bassist Pat Badger. The whole instantly became greater than the sum of its parts when the combustible creative fusion between Cherone and Bettencourt worked its magic. Their synergy has become Extreme's mainstay, with the rhythm team of Geary and Badger relentlessly driving the bands' trademark burning, churning, "funky-metal" sound.

Both live and on record, Extreme's essence is an unfailingly high-energy, athletic onslaught powered by an overall attitude that invites the listener to join in the heat-seeking madness for an Extremely wild experience. Cherone, who hurls body and soul into every set, believes that "...because of video, state of the art production and fast editing, the art of performance has somewhat gotten lost...you don't know if it's live or Memorex. We pride ourselves on our live show." As *KERRANG!* magazine agreed after seeing one of their performances: "With a live show that blows the competition away, Extreme should find that the road to the top is a short one indeed."

Guitarist Nuno Bettencourt plays with the kind of enthusiasm, skill and wild abandon that separates artists from entertainers. *Guitar World* magazine raved that Bettencourt's "rhythm and lead playing exhausts the beholder. He is manic, devastating and funky."

And this band can sing. Their intricate, perfectly nailed, four-part harmonies are skin tight, making up an integral part of their infectious wall of sound.

Extensive touring across the continental U.S. (including opening for Aerosmith) and a stopover in Japan after their premiere LP, helped turn a loyal regional following into a passionate international audience.

Pornograffiti is a collection of tracks showcasing the band's mastery of an eclectic array of rock genres. The album presents an arresting dialogue between 13 distinctively contrasting songs, each as

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compelling in its own right as is the provocative continuity of the whole. Produced by the red-hot Michael Wagener (ripe from smashes with Skid Row and White Lion) along with veteran Extreme engineer Bob St. John, *Pornograffiti* moves in mesmerizing new directions. "All killer, no filler!" remarks Cherone. Extreme have quite simply managed to harness a sonic masterpiece — point funk'ing blank!

The band refers to the collection of tracks as "a funkyed up fairytale," a loosely built storyline that leaves it open for interpretation. The tunes range from the full-tilt rock grooves of "Pornograffiti" and the first single "Decadence Dance," to the poetic and hauntingly simple strains of "More Than Words." Throw in the rap inflected, hook-laden "When I'm President," the vampish funk of "Little Jack Horny," the meaty chords of "Song for Love" and Cherone's stunning standard-like vocal on "When I First Kissed You," and you've got nothing less than a rich, complex and enticing tour de force that defies easy categorization. *Pornograffiti* alludes to many influences, but the synthesis is purely and indisputably original...far beyond the norm indeed.

Extreme continues to demonstrate their willingness to — and fervor for — flexing their musical muscles and taking artistic risks. Like their new record the band itself refuses to be restricted by formulaic notions of what a hard rock act should be. "Due to the age of the fast food music chain," waxes Bettencourt, "The magic of many bands' chemistry has diminished into worshipping the almighty dollar. I wouldn't say we're out to change music, but all you have to do is let *Pornograffiti* plague you — and the chemistry of the band will disease you...there is no cure." And, to quote the title track, "Can't you read the writing on the wall?" — Boston's Common may be famous, but Boston's Extreme is soon to be notorious.