review



WET WET WET: Hold Back The River (Phonogram)

The thing about Wet Wet Wet's second "real" LP (we won't count "The Memphis Sessions") is that with the exception of Marti's voice "Hold Back The River" sounds miles different from their first album, "Popped In Souled Out". Maybe that's something to do with the fact that they've produced the LP but, whatever the reason, it's pretty obvious that they've taken it into their heads to be more "mature" with their songwriting. Gone are the jaunty wee pop outings of old and instead – as you might have guessed from the first single "Sweet Surrender" – they've become a proper soul outfit. The first side's the best; as well as the single there are three longish tracks on it including two potential hits, "Blue For You" (an epic James Bond theme tune) and "Broke Away" (a sparse ballad with penny whistles and harps all over the shop). Side Two's a bit more suspect. For a start, they've done a version of a famous old Rod Stewart song, "Maggie May", which goes on for far too long and there's another dodgy tune called "You've Had It" which sounds like the kind of "adult-orientated" dirge Robert Palmer would put on a B-side. But then the other three tracks on the second side are better; one of them, "Keys To Your Heart", is even the type of singalong rouser that might feature in pub knees-ups in years to come. Altogether now! Roll out the barrelllll!!. . .

(8½ out of 10)

Mike Soutar