

ROCKPOOL

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

Severed Heads Rotund For Success (Nettwerk/Canada)

In this increasingly narrow-scoped/moribund environment that we so laughingly call the "alternative scene," Australia's **Tom Ellard** and/or Severed Heads are a consistent joy. Neither phobic nor philic about technology, Ellard uses the synth, the sampler and the computer to probe the darker/fleshier aspects of the human condition. As with the equally brilliant Come Visit The Big Bigot and Bad Mood Guy, this new LP combines dense, almost tortured sonic textures with a memorable, witty sense of melody rooted primarily in Ellard's wistful, John-Lennon-meets-Edgar-Allen-Poe vocals. The recent 12" successes, "All Saints Day" and "Greater Reward", are included here, both given superior mixes. Clubs and radio should both make a great deal of use out of tracks like the wiggly "Triangle Tangle Tango", the moody, bittersweet title track, or the ironically monickered "Casing Skirt", a great, black, aural sandstorm that chills the listener to the marrow inspiration. The Wizard of Oz has struck again, Rotund For Success is not to be missed.

Robert R. Conroy