

Puluche Album Review Rubric ©

Artist: Aerosmith		Album Title: Toys in the Attic (1975) Columbia			
Categories	Criteria				Rating
	4 - Exemplary	3- Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Underdeveloped	
<u>Compositions</u>	Every song is quality and has a distinctive appeal of its own. Tracks have a perfect flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal.	Many quality songs with distinctive appeal. Tracks have a good flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal.	Some quality songs with distinctive appeal but not sustained. Track flow and continuity have little effect on album's overall appeal.	Few to no quality songs lacking any distinctive appeal. Track flow and continuity have little/poor effect on album's overall appeal.	17.5
<u>Breaking Ground</u>	Has impressive elements of high creativity and is experimentally innovative. Developing own signature sound. Shows extreme growth and/or potential as a substantial and influential artist.	Features elements of creativity and uniqueness. Shows growth and/or potential as a developing and influential artist.	Has very few moments of creativity and uniqueness. Shows little growth and/or some potential as a developing artist. Displays some stagnation or notable regression as an established artist.	Has no creativity and uniqueness. Shows no growth and/or little potential as a developing or established artist.	20
<u>Engagement</u>	Music has a transcending quality with numerous songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Many songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality.	Music has transcending qualities with some songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Some songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality.	Music has some transcending qualities with few songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels, as well as having any addictive or memorable qualities.	Music has minimal transcending qualities and few to no songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels. No positive memorable qualities.	20
<u>Lyrical Voice</u>	Has a strong lyrical voice with multiple thought-provoking messages with clear and/or possible meanings and depth.	Has notable lyrical voice with some thought-provoking messages and/or possible meanings and depth.	Has limited lyrical voice with few-to-no thought-provoking messages, meanings and depth.	Has a weak lyrical voice with no thought-provoking messages or meanings and seriously lacks any depth.	17.5
<u>Production</u>	Masterful sound quality with noticeable studio techniques employed that demand headphone inquiry. Vision flawlessly executed. Overall packaging and artwork effectively compliments and enhances album enjoyment.	Very good sound quality with some noticeable studio techniques that demand headphone inquiry. Vision is acceptable. Overall packaging and artwork compliments album enjoyment.	Inconsistent sound quality with questionable studio techniques employed. Vision is questionable. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album.	Questionable to poor sound quality. Lacks vision. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album.	20

Comments

The sweet sound of 70s rock and roll. Before the spandex and hairspray of the Sunset Strip had a strong grip, there was straight down and dirty hard rock. It's sexy, it's grungy and even groovy. When Aerosmith appeared on the rock and roll circuit in 1973, it was apparent that they embodied all of these traits. The five "Bad Boys from Boston" had already begun cementing their blues and booze-soaked style throughout the country and released two prior albums in the early 70s. By 1975, it was time for another and *Toys in the Attic* was born.

Aside from containing two of the band's most popular songs, "Walk This Way" and "Sweet Emotion," *Toys in the Attic* contains some of the band's best work and the true sound of "America's Greatest Rock and Roll Band."

The band begins firing on all cylinders from the beginning. The album opens with the title track, filled with Joe Perry's excellent riffs and Tom Hamilton's groovy bass. The lyrics, sung by the inimitable Steven Tyler, get a little repetitive but echo the feeling of being out of touch with reality. "Uncle Salty" comes in at a slower pace but with a great narrative. It's like an earlier version of "Janie's Got a Gun," but better. The lyrics tell the story of a neglected and abused young girl whose prostitute mother and outlaw father left her in the care of an uncle ("Salty"). The guitar chords and steady beat give it the bluesy quality, with Hamilton's bass again grooving right along with the funky undertone.

"Walk This Way" is one of the biggest hits of Aerosmith's entire career, with its instantly recognizable opening riff and Tyler's rapid fire vocal delivery. Its subject matter is a theme prevalent throughout the entire *Toys* album: sex. Tyler has a knack for innuendo and his voice fits perfectly. You can feel him smirk each time he sings a lyric, which makes the song that much more enjoyable.

"Sweet Emotion" switches gears a little, with the bass and maracas giving the opening few seconds an exotic feel. It is another huge Aerosmith hit, with another riff that can, to quote Tyler's lyrics, "set your pants on fire." The lyrics are reportedly about Perry's ex-wife and the rift she caused within the band. Regardless of the truth to this rumor, the song is a great description of lust and hate and "sweet emotion."

The album is rounded out by three more outstanding numbers: the success tale of "No More, No More," the ultra heavy "Round and Round," and the beautiful ballad "You See Me Crying."

"No More, No More" starts out with a lovely acoustic intro, which leads into the full rocking verse. The piano laced in with the guitars gives the track an old school rock feel but doesn't take away from the band's raw power. The lyrics take you through the journey of being a rock star from a true rock star perspective.

"Round and Round" rolls in hotter and heavier than any of its predecessors. It has a definitive metal quality, with Joey Kramer pounding furiously at his drum kit and making great use of the cymbals. Perry's riffs, however, reign in and still keep the blues pumping in at all times. The lyrics don't necessarily implicate sex, but the sound and feel of the track itself have a libido of their own.

The album closes with "You See Me Crying," one of the band's best ballads (far superior to the overplayed and overly commercial "Don't Wanna Miss A Thing"). It's a more sincere profession of love that showcases the writing talent of Steven Tyler and the band's capabilities to cross over to the soft side.

<p><u>Commendations</u></p>	<p><i>Toys in the Attic</i> is a testament to the beauty and excellence of early Aerosmith. The quintet of Perry, Tyler, Hamilton, Whitford and Kramer created some of the best hard rock of the 70s with this album. “Walk This Way” and “Sweet Emotion” are the tracks that everyone knows, but there is so much more to be heard. “You See Me Crying” is arguably the best of the bands slow jams and “Uncle Salty” is much more raw and powerful than the band’s other track about a victimized female.</p> <p>Though the band has reached the pinnacle of success, listening to “No More, No More” makes time stand still, taking you back to when being a superstar was shiny and new to the boys from Boston. It is almost hard to believe that this is the same band that released <i>Just Push Play</i> in 2001. The Aerosmith sound has changed over the years with tracks like “Jaded,” but nothing will ever match the original formula.</p> <p>The sound of Aerosmith's early albums is real and raw, not saturated with commercial pop. It's not surprising, or maybe it is, that <i>Toys in the Attic</i> is the band's bestselling album (over 8 million in sales) despite the commercial albums that followed during their comeback.</p> <p>For anyone not familiar with the real Aerosmith, do yourself a favor and dig into the back catalog. You’ll be glad you did.</p>
<p><u>Next Steps</u></p>	<p><i>Toys in the Attic</i> received praise upon its 1975 release. It reached number 11 on the <i>Billboard 200</i> and spawned two singles with the immortal “Walk This Way” and “Sweet Emotion.” The band embarked on a worldwide tour and followed up <i>Toys in the Attic</i> with the equally impressive <i>Rocks</i> in 1976.</p> <p>Band conflict tore the members apart in 1979 with the departure of Joe Perry, followed by the exit of Brad Whitford. The band released <i>Rock in a Hard Place</i> in 1981, without Perry and Whitford, to little critical or public reception. The band eventually reunited in 1984 and is still active, recording eight more studio albums with the original lineup. While it was their comeback album, <i>Permanent Vacation</i> (1987), which cemented their eventual induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001, make no mistake that it was the sound produced during this album's era that made them so special and worthy.</p> <p>Aerosmith is scheduled to tour with Slash and Myles Kennedy and the Conspirators in the summer of 2014.</p>
<p><u>Reviewer</u></p>	<p>Hilari Barton <u>IRC:</u> Bill Pulice</p>