

## Let! Them Be

Love is all these emo moptops need to silence the haters

### Panic at the Disco

Pretty. Odd. ★★★★★

DELAIDANCE/HIJIELED BY RAMEN

Members of most bands pay their dues in a van with no money and no audience, but Panic at the Disco's Ryan Ross played nurse to an alcoholic dad who died when the young quartet first hit the road. And it's given the Vegas kids an acute sense of responsibility. Since few but the 1.5 million girls who bought Panic's first attempts at musicianship believed they deserved their success, it's not really a surprise that their follow-up feels like massive overcompensation.

While 2005's *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out* was Fall Out Boy with extra studio filigree, *Pretty. Odd.* is a big-budget Beatles love letter right down to its Abbey Road orchestra

This is a big-budget

### Beatles love letter down to its Abbey Road orchestra.

playing as loudly as the band over nearly every lysergic lyric. The results could've been embarrassing, but Ross and crew have stepped up their songwriting skills to such an extent that they begin the album with a reassurance that they're "still the same band"—though the evidence is utterly to the contrary. Centerpiece "When the Day Met the Night" volleys a sunshine pop sing-along that's as blindingly bright as most screamo/metalcore bands are dark, but the 14 other cuts are nearly as dazzling.

*Pretty. Odd.* lives up to its title because it dares to be optimistically beautiful at a time when sadness and ugliness might have won them easier credibility.

BARRY WALTERS

### Carl Craig

Carl Craig

Sessions ★★★★★½

IK7

Motown's mayor of electronica delivers a head-spinning address

In Carl Craig's nearly 20-year career turning out remixes for LCD Soundsystem, Deee-Lite, Goldfrapp, Depeche Mode, and others, he's logged almost as many clients as aliases (69, BFC, Innerzone Orchestra, Psyche, Tres Demented, and Paperclip People, to name a few). The schizo m.o.'s a sure sign that his techno work—which draws from disco, electro, drum'n'bass, ambient, garage, and more—is too expansive to fit under one roof. This two-disc set is an essential overview, from his raw early output as protégé of Detroit pioneer Derrick May to his microhouse-tinged remix of Junior Boys' "Like a Child" (which earned a recent Grammy nod). J. NIIMI

