

THE NECKBONES

The Lights Are Getting Dim
(Fat Possum Records)

The Neckbones are sort of a combination of the Clash and the Sex Pistols.

That is not meant as a compliment.

The Oxford, Miss., quartet has all the right moves — the grinding guitar, the smashing drums, the angry lyrics spat out in a guttural howl. All in all, it is a technically proficient classic punk band, be there such a thing.

The question is, who cares? The musicians are like the second or even third guy to discover America — someone else has been there first. There seems little point in reviving the classic sounds of late '70s punkdom except to satisfy the tastes of hard-core fans.

Oddly, the best song on this, the group's third album, has not even a trace of punk. "Little Red Wagon," which contains the lyric that gives the album its name, is a plaintive, old-fashioned Western ballad. The singer, apparently, has been mortally wounded and is pining for his wagon, a symbol of his childhood.

It's not clear whether the Neckbones intended this song to be taken seriously. If not and it was intended as some sort of prank, it turns out the joke is on them. — Sean Scully

"Now Hear This"

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