Drums Along the Hudson, The Bongos on PVC Records.

And now ... from the metropolis of Hoboken, New Jersey ... the Bongos! Though they're hardly a new band, Drums Along the Hudson is their first domestic release and it's drawing rave reviews. The accolades are well-deserved. This is a bright, fun pop record with plenty of hooks and catchy melodies.

Over the past two years, the Bongos have released a couple of fine singles, and these are thankfully included in this album. Several of these songs, including "In the Cuckoo," "Glow in the Dark" and "Manbo Kan" are real standouts. Their music echoes much of the best of 60's rock and soul from the British Invasion groups through Motown. This doesn't mean that the Bongos are a revival group; they've also absorbed a lot of the best influences from recent years as well.

The Bongos' post-punk in the usual sense of the term, although the sensibility is there. The closest comparison is probably to a few late 70's bands like the Boys who managed to temper punk's anger with the melodic sense of power pop. The Bongos, like last year's debut favorite U2, have incorporated bits and pieces of the post-disco electronic dance sound. Unlike Spandau Ballet or the Human League, they incorporate these influences very sparingly. Although the previously released material is the catchiest, there are some fine new songs as well. "The Bulrushes" and "Mambo Sun" are real standouts. Their music echoes much of the best of 60's rock and soul from the British Invasion groups through Motown. This doesn't mean that the Bongos are a revival group; they've also absorbed a lot of the best influences from recent years as well.

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