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RILO KILEY: UNDER THE BLACKLIGHT  
(You've Heard it Before)  
by Scott Unzicker

In the pantheon of former child stars looking for their place in the universe post-Hollywood, the bastion of pop rockdom is not an unknown refuge. Danny Bonaduce's eponymous 1973 album comes to mind, and who could forget David Hasselhoff's ultra-brave forays into music? Sure he wasn't a child star in the purest sense of the word, but did he ever *really* grow up? So follows Rilo Kiley.

Jenny Lewis, the 31 year old primary vocalist, keyboardist, and guitar player, formerly worked in such notable roles as Lucille Ball's granddaughter in *Life With Lucy*, as well as bit parts in *Baywatch*, *Golden Girls*, and Jell-O™ commercials. Blake Sennett, also 31, sings and plays lead guitar. Another veteran of Hollywood, he played Ronnie Pinsky on *Salute Your Shorts*, and "Joey the Rat" Epstein on *Boy Meets World*. There's no doubt, in Blake's case, that he has at least a modicum of original musical talent, having scored the underground black and white film *Don's Plum*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tobey Maguire. The quartet is rounded off by Pierre de Reeder on bass, more keys and vocals, and Jason Boesel on the skins.

*Under the Blacklight* (Warner Brothers) is the groups' fourth album and, to many diehard fans of the band, is a pretty disappointing offering.

After a few good, open-minded listenings, the first word that came to mind was "derivative." The first track, *Silver Lining*, starts off with an almost identical rhythm track to that of Tom Petty's *Breakdown*, and then introduces an almost note for note guitar line from George Harrison's *My Sweet Lord*. Not that these are bad fonts from which to draw musical inspiration, but direct lifts have gotten such notables as Vanilla Ice into trouble on more than one occasion. *Close Call* immediately evokes visions of a Tears for Fears/Cure collaboration, while *The Moneymaker*, a standout track, is Blondie all over again. *Breakin' Up*, a confused lament about relationship status, has tinges of Flaming Lips keyboard arrangements overlaid with breathy Cardigans vocal stylings around a disco hook, replete with a backing gospel choir who out-soul Jenny at every turnaround (a recurring event on several of the album's tracks).

Essentially, you've heard permutations of *every* song on this album somewhere else, and that does not bode well for the creative juices of the band. To be sure, there are a couple of listenable tracks there. The aforementioned *The Moneymaker*, would be great for any Studio 54 party, and Jenny's almost-sultry vocals on *15* are enjoyable, if *very* repetitive. All in all, *Under the Blacklight* is a fairly disposable collection that seems to revel in rehashing hooks and beats from songs of the members' withering childhoods.

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