

# Exclaim Magazine Review

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By Ryan B. Patrick  
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Vancouver-based group Freeflow tout themselves as practitioners of urban rock, a “unique blend hip-hop, soul, reggae, and rock.” And with this self-titled sophomore effort, these fearless funkadelics have distilled the music they love — that being black music — into a reasonable facsimile thereof. But with any “unique blend,” achieving a satisfactory flavour is contingent on a careful balance of all ingredients to prevent insipidness. Have the West Coast Eastsiders been successful? I guess it’s a matter of taste. “This music comes straight from my heart chakra/From Run-DMC to Charlie Parker,” says Freeflow foreman Jason Evans, and who’s to quarrel with such an impassioned manifesto? Especially when the production is slick, the joints are catchy, and

the lyrics are earnest. Well known on the West Coast live show circuit, the Ben Kaplan-produced project is an obvious attempt to capture the band’s jam session sound. But the most excellent tracks are those that commit to a single musical genre (such as the reggae-scented “Take Me,” the hip-hopping “I Can Do” and rock-out joint “Higher”) and avoid being something for everybody. The oft-visited lyrics on “Girlfriend” (“My girlfriend’s got a girlfriend/I don’t know what to do”) leads one to believe that either the ditty was written in earnest a long time ago or is a frantic attempt to be “edgy.” But overall, I can’t grudge these dudes. They do what they do and they do it well.