

REVIEWS

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Rock for the littlest fans

MUSIC
REVIEW

Kráľ vysiľá své vojsko; Zuby Nehty: Indies Records, 1995. CD, 279 Kč; cassette, 149 Kč.

Popular music is all about pleasing the fans. So it's not surprising that Prague's favorite all-woman rock group, Zuby Nehty, has produced a CD that unashamedly panders to the tastes of their most adoring followers, their own children — the band members have spawned nine little rockers among them.

The latest CD, *Kráľ vysiľá své vojsko* (The King Is Sending Out His Army) is a rock throw-back to the rhythms and sounds of nursery rhyme, play and fairy tale, exploring the scale of childish emotions from their exhilarating heights to the murky underworld of the nasty unknown.

"*Kráľ vysiľá své vojsko*" is the Czech name of the game English-speaking children call "Red Rover," and the disc is a Peter and the Wolf of a CD — rich in colorful tales and well-produced.

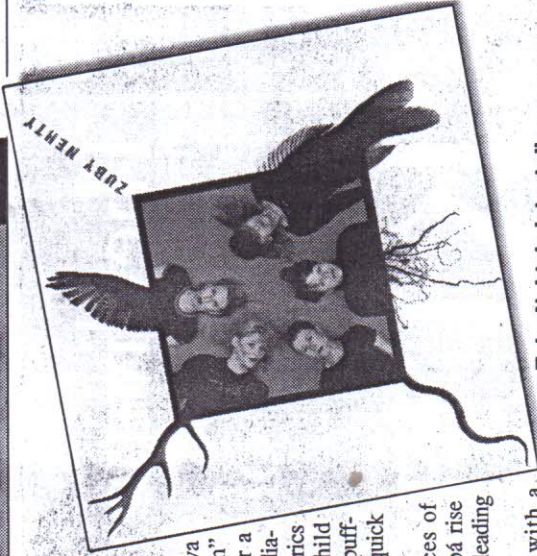
Not to be confused with the American rock phenomenon of "riot grrrl" bands, Zuby Nehty are women, not girls: specifically, a group of class-A female musicians who have come up with a way to

and brilliant songwriter Pavla Slabá. Listening to the opening track, "Výprava do amazonských pralesť za diamantem" (Expedition to the Amazonian Forest for a Diamond), is a peek at a make-believe diamond-hunting adventure. Through the lyrics of this bouncy number, we hear the child studying an imaginary map, huffing and puffing in a steaming jungle, squeezing in a quick game of tag to liven things up.

Throughout this first track the voices of drummer Hana Řepová and bassist Slabá rise above the chorus like jubilant scallywags leading a noisy nursery rhyme.

"Kobyłka" (Grasshopper), opens with a Keystone Cops-*cum*-ska rhythm, complete with playground whistles and clacking spoons. The prevalent musical theme of this CD — syncopated rhythms and vocals in a "round" — are used to best effect here. "Kobyłka" satisfies all the requirements of nursery rhymes: catchy, sing-songy and ambiguous.

Moving on to darker stuff, the ghoulish strains of "Velryby" (Whales), with its exaggerated modern disjointedness, plunges us into a fantasy landscape — a child's nightmare adventure, an uncertain midnight journey in search of the mysterious big fish. Jirčíková's haunting flute twists and curls itself with sinister intent through the song — the wicked witch creeping through the forest.



Zuby Nehty's latest disc is a new kind of magical mystery tour.

standard, as does the entire CD, which shows diligent production and thoughtful writing.

The musicians thread their sounds through one another like fingered vines, with precision and art. With two saxophonists, a pianist and a flautist, Zuby Nehty is essentially a band of potential soloists who have each wisely sacrificed the limelight in favor of a more coherent sound.

No one song is dominated by a top-heavy saxophone or over-ardent piano. The overall effect is one of a polished musical pantomime, and Zuby Nehty are the good witches, the damsels in distress and ugly sisters all in one.