



Beautiful Decay
September 2005

A.R.E. Weapons
Free In The Streets
Rough Trade Records

Electronic Punk may sound like the worst idea ever, but New York trio A.R.E. Weapons and their album *Free In the Streets* are poised to prove such ideas wrong. More cohesive than electronic/emo hybrids like The Postal Service, A.R.E. Weapons recall 80s new wave, if new wave was a bully in a back ally instead of a guy with a keyboard and big, feathery hair. *Free In the Streets* is equal parts raw, open wound and pure synthetic backbone.

Vocalist Brain F. McPecks lazy, sexy vocals weave through the record wailing, snarling and growling through *Streets*'s 12 tracks, starting with the deceptive I-can-cry-if-I-want-to-because-I'm-a-badass song "These Tears." "Doghouse" invokes the umph and attitude of hip-hop stirred with the aesthetic and themes of rock.

Some songs towards the middle of the album become a bit of a snoozefest ("Hardcase," "Last Cigarette"), but the sex-driven "Be Nice" and fast-paced "F.K.F" make the album worth sorting through. "Brand New Walking Blues" is every bit as much for dancing as it is for strutting the cat-errr-sidewalk. As a whole, however, it's roaming in the streets for which this music is best suited. Go nuts.

[Natalie B. David]