

REVIEWS

THE STROKES

**Comedown Machine**

[RCA]

The fifth album from these lo-fi New York City garage heroes clocks in at a mere 40 minutes, and for the first eight songs, it's classic Strokes: an energetic romp that's equal parts scratchy austerity and voltaic pop. After an opening screech, the trebly guitars on "Tap Out" smooth into something vaguely reminiscent of disco, while instantly appealing lead single "All the Time" finds frontman Julian Casablancas drawing out his syllables behind muffled distortion, chanting about living too fast. Casablancas nails a power-packed falsetto on "One Way Trigger," a deceptively bouncy song about contemplating reasons to leave and wishing to be noticed. On the lightening-fast "50/50"—a standout for post-punk fans—quick, raw guitars and wailing vocals recall the best of the band's 2001 debut, *Is This It*. Track nine, "Chances," marks a turning point toward mellower fare, and by the time *Comedown* closes with "Call It Fate, Call It Karma," it's become almost jazzy, justifying its title. —Shauna Farnell

'Classic Strokes: an energetic romp that's equal parts scratchy austerity and voltaic pop.'

