

UNREST LONDON BORDERLINE

WHAT WITH charging, buzzsaw guitars, a distinctly nerdy stage presence and songs like 'Cherry Cream On' oozing manic levels of sexual frustration, you'd be forgiven for marking Unrest down as a Yank Wedding Present, an impression that's only reinforced by the breakneck pace of most of their performance.

Thankfully, rather than

descending into blank noise-outs or Gedge-style grunting, they manage to combine their frequently hyperactive attack with a heart-rending tenderness, as evidenced by 'Imperial', a Spiritualized-style opus that begins proceedings in a delightfully understated fashion. Better still, despite the superficially crazed ambience of 'Bavarian', 'Teenage' and 'Isabel', at the heart of even their most frenzied moments are soft, tune-drenched centres.

Their sweet lyrical side more

than makes up for a lack of technique that would condemn lesser talents to shambling banality. In keeping with their fresh-faced, straight-outta-college appearance (It's almost impossible to believe that they've made four albums), Unrest are big on three-note basslines and beginners-book jangling — but their naivety saves them from muso tedium, leading instead to wonderfully economic pop music.

The most dizzying pleasure comes from 'June', a minimal, repetitive affair that finds bassist

Bridge crooning in tones that are almost angelic and the sublime 'Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl, a dreamy, delicate song that's love-lorn and wordy while keeping well clear of clichéd sopppiness.

After 45 minutes, Unrest begin to sound rather samey (things would have been improved by more of the downbeat introspection of the impressive 'Imperial ffr' album), but their rare ability to fuse ham-fisted catharsis with sugary sensitivity proves that this lot are something rather special.

John Harris