

Hot



**The Kerrang! Buzz
Band of the week**

311

Rage Against The Machine meet the Chili Peppers and sell a million records...

THE PAST few months in the lives of LA-based quintet 311 have been a rollercoaster ride. When their third, self-titled LP was released last summer it barely caused a ripple, though this was a big splash compared to the impact of its predecessors, 'Grassroots' and 'Music'.

But while their record sales had never set the world, or their bank balances, alight, it was as a touring act that 311 were making their name. More than 100 US shows this year alone – including stints with Kiss, Cypress Hill, and the HORDE and Warped tours – in front of more than half-a-million people, and the world suddenly started to sit up and take notice of their canny blend of rock, reggae, funk and hip-hop.

The video for 'Down' was added to MTV's playlist, soon propelling '311' high into the Billboard Charts. A cool mix of Rage Against The Machine

rapping and Chili Peppers' grooves, with a dash of eclecticism, it has now sold more than a million copies.

"It just got to the point where MTV couldn't ignore us any more without starting to look pretty stupid," explains blond, blue-eyed vocalist Nick Hexum.

"We can honestly say we've done it on our own terms," adds bassist P-Nut. "It's pretty groovy."

Hexum, guitarist J Mahoney and drummer Chad Sexton first got together in a high school band called Unity in Omaha, Nebraska in 1988. A couple of years later, P-Nut and vocalist/DJ SA Martinez joined up and the band became 311. Six months later, they relocated to LA, signed a record deal and began touring relentlessly in a battered van which eventually went up in flames.

They've just completed their first sell-out US arena tour, playing to a rabid crowd of skaters, stoners and

punks, most of whom seem to have been fresh-faced teenagers.

"We try to put over a positive message," says Hexum. "I think people got fed up of always hearing about how much the world sucks. It takes more of a stand to say, 'This is good'."

It's a sentiment which re-occurs time after time at 311's gigs. There's an air of almost continual celebration throughout their shows. No more so than on 'Misdirected Hostility', an attack at certain angst-ridden, self-obsessed 'alternative' bands.

'I cannot handle all the negative vibe merchants', sings Martinez, 'because all that angst shit is just cheesy'.

Wise words, rapping bloke. ■

KEVAN ROBERTS

311's self-titled new album is out now in the UK through Capricorn/Mercury.