

The Strokes: What Happened?

- Liam Reilly

In 2001, *Is This It?*, the debut album of the New York-based rock group The Strokes, was released. The great music and garage band charm of the five-man group was so powerful that *Is This It?* has sold over three million copies since its release, and was ranked second on a list compiled by *Rolling Stone* of the best albums of the 2000's. This album was so well-received, that the band's sophomore album became one of the most anticipated second efforts by any band. Ever. However, the initial commercial success of The Strokes eventually became a hindrance, as each of the four albums released by the group since then have tried to emulate the success of their first album, lofty standards that are unreasonable to expect. Each album released by The Strokes since *Is This It?* (*Room On Fire* in 2003, *First Impressions Of Earth* in 2005, *Angles* in 2011) has been good, very good. Unfortunately, they will always be compared to one of the greatest albums of all time, which causes each album to falter in its prestige somewhat; this is unfair to the band, and the quality music that it has been putting out over the last twelve years.

The most recent release by The Strokes, *Comedown Machine* (released March 26) is no different in style than the other albums by the band, thus naturally forcing the listener to compare *Comedown Machine* to *Is This It?*. In addition, the most recent offering from The Strokes follows the pattern of the band's other albums in the use of proven and new music. Each album by The Strokes is rather like the English MCAS. There are songs in the style of *Is This It?*, that are proven to work and be successful, and there are experimental songs, that, much like some MCAS prompts, are of a different variety and style. *Comedown Machine* has plenty of each in classic, Stokes-style songs like "All The Time" and "Slow Animals," and new, horizonbroadening songs like "One Way Trigger." In the end, *Comedown Machine* will leave any fan of The Strokes satisfied, but only satisfied. This is because we all know that The Strokes have the ability to make monumental albums like *Is This It?*, but for the time being are only making albums lacking in that otherworldly touch. Will The Strokes continue their slightly downward trajectory for the rest of the band's life? I hope not, and I believe that one day, The Strokes can return to the pinnacle of the rock world. Until then, as Mary Poppins once said, "Enough is as good as a feast." (8 out of 10)