



By **Stephanie King**

[*Bloodbuzz Ohio*](#) is a steadily building mini-epic that will lift your spirits and break your heart; a perfect introduction to The National's new album. Lead singer Matt Berninger's deadpan baritone murmurs through a simmering intro of stammering drums and rousing brass.

Intense but understated keyboards weave repeated chimes through a heart-in-mouth drumbeat onto a gentle non-chorus. Despite the rich instrumentation, the tight drums maintain an atmosphere of tension, underpinning the quiet desperation of Berninger's reserved vocals.

As *Bloodbuzz Ohio* makes its stately progression, it grows and unfolds, with its subtle variations revealing a hard-hitting climax. Berninger's deep, laconic voice is part goth-fairytale

[Nick Cave](#)

, part cold, depressive

[Ian Curtis](#)

, but his sullen drawls are balanced by the lushness of the orchestral arrangements which soar against the crunching, alt-rock

[Interpol](#)

guitars.

Reminiscent of [Broken Social Scene's](#) rhythmic melancholy and [Arcade Fire's](#) joyful atheist hymns,

Bloodb

uzz Ohio

is big hearted and generous, moving through its four-and-a-half-minutes with an emotionally wired majesty. It is this relationship between an inspiring, hopeful sound and lyrics that carry the burden of life's crushing disappointments that makes The National so affecting.

I've had the release date of The National's new album, *High Violet*, in my diary for weeks (10/05/10). Their recent sell-out show at the Royal Albert Hall and a string of positive reviews indicate they are finally getting the recognition they deserve.

This track was leaked ages ago, but I've been holding off making *Bloodbuzz Ohio* song of the week until now, as I want as many of you as possible to listen to this and be so moved by the song's urgent ambivalence that you go out and buy *High Violet*. So listen to it now, fall in love with The National, take them to your heart and then enjoy having it broken.