

Reckoning

LONG before their major-label stadium-slaying days, R.E.M. were laying the template for modern indie rock.

With Stipe's mumbled moan, Buck's jangling Rickenbacker, and the tight rhythms of Mills and Berry, they were **THE** band for cool kids.

Some might pick the mystical magnificence of debut *Murmur* as the pinnacle of their early achievements, but I go for follow-up *Reckoning*.

Here presented with a blinding live performance, it's pretty much faultless, from opener *Harborcoat* to the still swoonsome (*Don't Go Back To*) *Rockville*.

The most important US band of the past 25 years? You bet. (Sorry Kurt.) **SC**

