

BROTHERS PAST

This Feeling's Called Goodbye (SCI FIDELITY)



When we—collective pop culture, that is—lionize and memorialize all the tuneful, snappy, stylishly synth-friendly haircut bands of MTV's early golden era, it's with the unspoken assumption that their music is dead as a contemporary influence. It's just kitschy and nostalgic fun. That puts this Philadelphia foursome at a disadvantage in getting attention with its crystalline production, shimmering keyboards and laptop manipulations, emotive harmony singing and effervescent melodies that deftly mix major- and minor-key chord changes in an ebullient yet melancholy-tinged way. The intro to this album's opening "Leave the Light On" instantly recalls A-Ha's "Take on Me." Great song! But Brothers Past isn't exclusively living in the past. Guitarist Tom Hamilton has applied some jam-band-influenced playing to the buoyant pop-song structure on "Simple Gift of Man," and it builds with surprising wailing-guitar intensity. There's a future in this kind of music. **STEVEN ROSEN**