



POP

**Revenge is Slow**  
**Bluebottle Kiss**  
**Shock**

★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

WHEN a lot of people think of alternative bands, they imagine poor production and a bunch of guys who, quite frankly, are not good enough to transcend the category. Bluebottle Kiss are just one of many challengers to this assumption: *Revenge is Slow* is an intense, multi-layered collection of songs with enough captivating rough edges to jolt any listener out of their aural malaise. This is the Sydney-based band's fourth and most accomplished album, possibly due to last year's addition of bass player Ben Grounds (formed in 1993, the band had previously existed as a three-piece). Compared recently in the UK to Coldplay, Bluebottle Kiss can also sound a little like At The Drive-In or Something For Kate's darker moments. But there's plenty of light to balance the shade. The single, *An Ounce of Your Cruelty*, is a radio-friendly slice of melodic pop, with a simple guitar hook and relentless drums that subtly imprint their rhythm in your head. The opening track, *Father's Hands*, is a folksy, country-tinged tale of reminiscence, a feel that pops up on other parts of the album, courtesy of some nice pedal steel. In essence, *Revenge is Slow* is a successful hybrid, with songs that move from power pop (*Last Cinema*, *Hasten the Blows*) through to inventive, slow-building, earnest tracks that are lyrically strong and delicately embellished. Songs such as *Peewee's Dream* and *Hello Stranger* are good examples of this band's complexity, making subtle use of harp, horns, piano, viola and cello, and even operatic background vocals.

**Sandra Bridekirk**