RUSH
Counterparts
ATLANTIC 7567825282

Nineteen years and albums into their career, Canada’s leading power-trio have established a caucus of loyal fans and a platinum-selling pedigree but have managed to elude fashion at every turn – perhaps unsurprisingly given that their closet is stuffed with skeletons such as By-Tor And The Snow Dog and the very silly 2112. Still, let’s be fair; a good half of Counterparts is absolutely first-rate modern rock. Indeed, the first 20 minutes could give anyone from Pearl Jam to U2 a run for their money – classy yet muscular stuff exemplified by the opening track Animate and the excellent single Stick It Out, with its nasty, Groundhogsy riff. Even the ballad, Nobody’s Hero, is handled with sincerity and aplomb. Sadly, the latter half of the record settles into a kind of workmanlike but unenticing Zeppelinesque thrash. But there’s enough virtually great stuff here to turn that sneer into a low whistle of praise.★★★

Stuart Maconie