



**NEIL HALSTEAD**  
**Oh! Mighty Engine**

BRUSHFIRE/ISLAND

★★★

**Gentle joy from former Slowdive frontman**

Halstead's second solo album repays concentration. An impeccable songwriter – if one sometimes too little in love with his own subtlety, both in terms of tune and lyric – Halstead was frontman of both Slowdive and Mojave 3, and *Oh! Mighty Engine* is typically whimsical, low key and surprisingly touching (when you can make out what he is singing). Halstead mines a very British folk tradition – Bert Jansch and Billy Bragg are touchstones – although the catchy “Always The Good” has more than a trace of latterday Leonard Cohen about it.

PETER SHEPHERD